

ESSAYS IN SOCIOLOGY

VOL. II.

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BY

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THE ECONOMICS OF GENIUS.

(1898.)

Haud facile emergunt.—JUVENAL.

I.

IN the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* for May, 1897, Prof. C. H. Cooley, of the University of Michigan, works out an able and successful refutation of a prevalent theory—of which the typical exponent is Mr. Francis Galton—concerning the distribution and emergence of genius in human affairs. Theory is perhaps too strong a name for what is really the statement of a common empirical assumption; but, as Galton supports his view of the matter by a certain process of statistics, it may fitly be allowed the status of a scientific contention. Briefly, this theory is that, although conditions count for something, genius in general is sure to work its way to the front; that fame, or the consensus of educated opinion, is a sufficiently sure test of genius; and that a prevailing preponderance of genius *per capita* in any society is to be taken as proving *pro tanto* a superiority in the race. These positions Mr. Cooley examines, in his essay on 'Genius, Fame,

and the Comparison of Races,' with great candor and acumen; exposing their collective unsoundness, in my judgment, with convincing clearness.

So far as my reading goes, Mr. Cooley is entitled to claim that, while his position is not new,* no one has so fully maintained it in this particular connection; although the research of M. de Candolle in his *Histoire des Sciences et des Savants* handles the general problem perhaps more comprehensively. It is with some diffidence, therefore, that I venture to suggest that the argument may be carried further, not only as against Galton, but as against more circum-spect attacks from Galton's point of view. The practical importance of the question, however, may excuse an attempt—made in entire sympathy with Mr. Cooley—thus to develop the discussion.

What Mr. Cooley has shown, as against the optimistic assumption that genius will always work its way to the front, is that, in view of the relatively very large number of cases in which admitted genius is found to have had distinctly favoring conditions, and of the number in which it could not conceivably have developed without

*See, for instance, the discussion in Prof. William James's essay on 'Great Men, Great Thoughts and the Environment,' reprinted in his recent volume, 'The Will to Believe'.

either special cherishing or special stimulus, we are bound to conclude that much genius normally runs to waste—fame giving no account of it—and that race has practically nothing to do with the explanation. It is true that Galton has in a measure safeguarded his theory by the question-begging definition of genius† as “those qualities of intellect and disposition which *urge* and *qualify* a man to perform acts that lead to reputation. . . . I mean a nature which, when left to itself, *will*, urged by an inherent stimulus, climb the path that leads to eminence, *and has strength to reach the summit*.” As he justly observes, “it is almost a contradiction in terms to doubt that such men will generally become eminent”. A man who “will climb”, and “has strength to reach the summit”, seems pretty sure to get there; and if such men only are to be credited with the highest “natural ability”, why, then, those who do not reach the summit are defined as deficient.

But the rest of the exposition shows that Galton's doctrine must be susceptible of a more

† In the current edition of ‘Hereditary Genius’ (1892, p. 33) Galton uses the term “natural ability”, instead of “genius”, in this connection; but the use of “genius”, which is so much more convenient, does not in any way pervert his argument. Reputation he defines as “the opinion of contemporaries, revised by posterity”. This will do equally well for fame.

courageous definition. He recognises as geniuses a number of celebrities of the past who would be generally so classed without dispute; and he implies that these would under any circumstances have succeeded. Noting, too, that "culture is far more widely spread in America than with us [in England], and the education of their middle and lower classes far more advanced," without producing a proportionate amount of first-class intellectual work, he argues that "if the hindrances to the rise of genius were removed from English society as completely as they have been removed from that of America, we should not become materially richer in highly eminent men." The hindrances here assumed are, by implication, those set up by lack of elementary schooling and of facilities for acquiring ordinary culture. But, if the argument holds good to that extent, it should follow that any other social hindrance to the development of genius is equally ineffective, and that society at all times gets the benefit of practically all the genius there is.

The disproof of this opinion, as put by Mr. Cooley, may be condensed in two lines of statement. First, on an examination of the list of names classed as pre-eminent in European literature in Prof. Nichol's synoptical 'Tables' — a manual compiled for strictly historical purposes — it is found that out of seventy-one specified in

a period of six hundred years (1265-1865) only two are those of sons of poor men ; while forty-five may be classed as born in the upper or upper-middle class, and twenty-four in the lower middle. Allowing some re-adjustment of the latter two classifications, the fact remains that two only of the seventy-one men of genius in question were sons of poor men ; to wit, Bunyan and Burns.† Now, the parents of Bunyan, though very poor, were at the then unusual pains to have him taught reading and writing ; so that he was thus put on the same average level of intellectual opportunity with the lower-middle class of his day. In the case of Burns, again, though boys of his class in Scotland were usually taught reading and writing, we find special conditions set up by the uncommon devotion of the father to the education of his children.

I have compared Mr. Cooley's list of seventy-one celebrities with Prof. Nichol's 'Tables', and noted its omissions. He has dealt with the great majority of the most famous writers ; but in addition to his list, the following thirty-nine

†Luther might perhaps be taken from the category of the lower-middle class, in which Mr. Cooley places him, and included in that of the poor. But his parents, like those of Bunyan and Burns, were able to send him to school, and he had his further education gratis ; so that, in any view, his case strongly supports the principle contended for.

names are by analogy entitled to be included :— Bayle, Beaumont, Berkeley, Björnson, Bolingbroke, Buffon, Butler, Calvin, Chateaubriand, Comines, Diderot, Emerson, Flaubert, Fletcher, Franklin, Hawthorne, Herder, Herrick, Hood, Ibsen, Joubert, Lamb, Le Sage, Marmontel, Marvell, Meredith, More, Poe, Sachs, Schopenhauer, Smollett, Sterne, Jeremy Taylor, De Tocqueville, Turgéneff, Vauvenargues, Villon, Webster, and Wieland. Not a single name in the list, however, can fairly be added to the category of poor men's sons ; nor can I find in all the ' Tables' a single literary man of eminence who made his way from unschooled poverty by force of genius.

Thus far, then, it is ascertained that the only two (or three) poor men's sons who, out of one hundred and ten celebrities during six centuries, attained the highest degree of fame in European literature, really had advantages quite abnormal in their class. Yet we are implicitly asked to believe that, had the cultural advantages been the same for all classes, the division which is broadly marked as "poor", and which has at all times been at least thrice as numerous as the remainder, would have yielded no larger proportion of eminent intellectual achievement than it has done. A proposition so unreasonable can have been advanced only through lack of due reflection. In order to justify it, it would be necessary to

show, by critical tests, that the composite masses classed as "poor" are actually deficient, number for number, in congenital brain-power, as compared with those born in better circumstances; and that, say, a given million of poor children, educated in the same conditions with a given million of the upper and middle classes, would yield less than one-hundredth part of the number of cases of first-rate literary ability supplied by the latter. No such evidence exists. The assumption under notice is an uncritical, empirical inference from statistics, the very nature of which suggests another explanation.

II.

The strongest argument for any part of the Galtonian view seems to be that based on the relative infrequency of ostensible genius in the population of the United States as compared with that of England, where the elementary schooling is still less complete, and was for a long time much more scanty. It is at this point that the argument from the presence or absence of such conditions in the case of British men of letters must be followed up by an examination of the conditions of intellectual success in a community where the poorer masses are secured a measure of schooling, and where mere class prejudice puts little or no hindrance in the

way of a poor youth's reaching intellectual eminence.

Galton argues, by implication, that if genius be socially suppressible by adverse conditions, and if favorable conditions be capable of developing a larger proportion of genius, the population of the United States ought to yield more great writers, thinkers, poets, artists, and men of science than the British. At the first glance, this assumption is plausible; especially when we have been arguing that the illiteracy of the mass of the English population in past ages is the explanation of there being only two poor men's sons among the literary men of genius of six centuries. But it is only at a first glance that the plausibility subsists. A little reflection makes it clear that the emergence of high literary capacity is the outcome of *the totality of intellectual and economic conditions*, and that Galton has given no thought to this totality, which varies greatly from age to age, and which differs widely as between England and the United States. Let us first note a few of the differences in the latter case.

(1) To this day England has a much larger leisured class, in the sense of a class living on inherited incomes, than the United States. This class has, in the past hundred and fifty years,

supplied the following writers: — Bentham, Browning, Buckle, Byron, Cowper, Darwin, Disraeli, Finlay, Fitzgerald, the author of "Supernatural Religion", Freeman, Francis Galton, Gibbon, Hallam, P. G. Hamerton, Hamilton, Hume, Keats, Kinglake, Landor, Lecky, Cornewall Lewis, Long, Lytton, Mitford, William Morris, Napier, Palgrave, De Quincey, Ruskin, Senior, Shelley, Stanhope, Swinburne, Symonds, Tennyson (also pensioned), Thackeray (lost income before thirty), Tylor, and Wordsworth. In our own day this class appears to yield a decreasing supply of eminent men—a fact to be dealt with later.

(2) Until quite recently there was in Britain a much larger provision for intellectual life than in the United States in the way of University and other endowments and ecclesiastical sinecures. To such provision may be attributed much of the output of such writers as Austin, Bain, Cairnes, Clifford, Colenso, Gardiner, Gray, T. H. Green, Huxley, Jevons, Maine, Malthus, Mansel, Merivale, Milman, Newman, Owen, Pater, Pattison, Reid, Robertson, Thorold Rogers, Sayce, Seeley, Sidgwick, Stanley, Stubbs, Thirlwall, Warton, Whewell, and others. Now that American University endowments are multiplying, the competent output of serious treatises

is seen to be increasing much more rapidly in the United States than in England.

(3) Public appointments which are (*a*) semi-sinecures, or (*b*) so well salaried as to permit of the speedy accumulation of a fortune, or (*c*) so easy as to permit of a great deal of leisure, have always been far more numerous in England than in the States. To the help of such appointments may be attributed much of the production of the following writers:—Matthew Arnold, Hill Burton, Charles Lamb, Macaulay, James Mill, John Stuart Mill, Patmore, Scott (whose sheriffalty was an easy post), and Trollope.

(4) Certain business positions a generation or more ago, if not to-day, permitted a much larger amount of leisure in England than was usually possible in similar positions in the United States. In such positions were: Bagehot (banker), Grote (banker), Lubbock (banker), Hugh Miller (well-schooled quarryman, afterwards bank accountant), Ricardo (stockbroker), and Samuel Sharp (banker).

The foregoing heads have reference to the superior directly protective conditions in England. But with these there have concurred certain favorable conditions which may be termed indirectly protective, either absolutely or relatively to the conditions in the States. Such have been:

(5) The presence, in the past, of what may be described as an old and relatively rich literary soil and a literary atmosphere. These were jointly supplied by the leisured, the scholarly, and the educated official classes, all built up on old protective foundations. Among the English idle class in particular, despite much frivolity, the conditions of political life for two hundred years have tended to stimulate certain kinds of study. The State clergy, too, by reason of the secure character of the incomes of the better paid and of the social status accorded them for over a century back, have till recently been more liberally educated than those of most of the sects in America. There has thus been generated all round an atmosphere much more favorable to specialised culture than that which prevailed in the greater part of the United States till twenty or thirty years ago, when Galton first wrote, and this despite the greater diffusion in the States of elementary education.

(6) Partly by reason of the conditions just specified, American writers were for a long time handicapped as compared with English. Not only did a certain prestige attach, for competent American readers, to English work, but the law as to copyright permitted, till recently, the sale of reprinted English books at prices which often left nothing for the author, and with which native

writers could not possibly compete. The United States, indeed, may be said to have protected every native activity that incurred foreign competition save literature. In consequence, Americans who sought to live by the higher or more laborious sorts of literature had an almost hopeless struggle before them. Washington Irving, after producing his first book, took to business for a while; and after he had returned to authorship as a profession, was glad to have the secretaryship of the American Embassy in London. Poe's life was one of constant and at times desperate hardship, and would have been so even if he had been a teetotaller. Hawthorne could hardly have subsisted but for his political appointments—appointments which, since his time, are more and more seldom given to men who, like him, can render their party little political service. Cooper had to work to excess, forcing his vein, to support himself. Emerson's adoption of serious literature as a vocation was the result of his being left, through change of religious opinion, unfitted for any other income-earning pursuit. Lowell had private means apart from his professorship. Bryant made his income as a banker. Longfellow had a good unearned income. Whitman lived as a poor man all his life, and finally had to be supported by donations. On Galton's theory of genius

these were all, or nearly all, the men of high potential literary genius in the States during fifty years. Reason would seem to force us to the conclusion that, on the contrary, there were among the mass of the population at least some hundreds of brains which, with due fostering and opportunity, could have produced first-class intellectual work, whether in the way of *belles lettres*, or science, or philosophy, or historical research. The American historians, like those of England, have one and all either possessed private means or public appointments, or else have had to add to their incomes by lecturing or impermanent literary work.

Galton himself has affirmed that such commanders as Alexander, Scipio, Hannibal, Cæsar, Cromwell, Marlborough, the Princes of Nassau, Wellington, and Napoleon "would have distinguished themselves under any circumstances." While noting the difficulty of conceiving of Scipio, Marlborough, and Wellington distinguishing themselves as thinkers or writers, we may fairly take this proposition to mean that the men named could have succeeded greatly either as politicians or as men of business in a non-military society. If, then, that be conceivable, it is equally arguable that men who have succeeded greatly in politics or business in a non-military society might have succeeded no less in

the intellectual life had their circumstances been sufficiently favorable to that vocation.

The most pressing necessity for most men being the earning of a livelihood, it stands to reason that some men with the capacity for great things in thought or expression, finding it nearly impossible to earn a fair income by such activity, will turn from that path to one of those where earning is incomparably easier. In many cases, men are forced so to choose by the need to support those dear to or dependent upon them: in other cases, they may rationally so choose for their own sakes.

On Galton's principle, the much larger number of culture-specialists in Germany than in England is a proof of a proportionally greater capacity for such things in the German people. A more considerate induction will show that it is merely the special provision made for such activities by the German university system, concurrently with the contrary influence of the commercial development long ago imposed on England by her natural resources and her political system, that sets up the difference.

Mr. Cooley has well shown, further, the breakdown of the Galtonian principle when applied to such a case as the rise, florescence, and fall of the art of painting in Italy between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries. On the theory of

special national faculties, that process is inexplicable. On the theory of the potency of economic and social conditions, it is perfectly intelligible.

III.

As with nations, so with classes. The researches of M. de Candolle have shown that the proportion of successful men of science drawn from the working-class has varied, as between France and other countries, in a way that can be explained only by special evocative influences. Studying the lists of the members and foreign associates of the French Academy of Sciences between 1666 and 1870, he finds that out of ninety of the ninety-two foreign associates whose careers he can trace, six only, or 7 per cent., belong to the working-class; thirty-seven, or 41 per cent., belonging to rich or aristocratic families, and forty-seven, or 52 per cent., to the middle class. Making up a list of sixty first-rate French *savants* of the same period, forty of whom had been associates of both the French Academy of Sciences and the Royal Society of London, he finds that, of this number, fourteen, or 23 per cent., belonged to the multitude, twenty-one, or 35 per cent., to the rich or noble class, and twenty-five, or 42 per cent., to the middle class. In the list of forty eminent Frenchmen honored at London and Berlin, he has traced thirty-six

careers; and of these no fewer than nine, or 25 per cent., spring from the working class.

M. de Candolle does not attempt to explain the difference thus indicated between France and other countries; but, in view of what has gone before, we may provisionally do so by attributing it to the special educative machinery set up in France in the last century by the Jesuit schools,* and, since the Revolution, by the republican and Napoleonic provision of a similar kind. When all is said, however, the researches of M. de Candolle yield the outstanding result that, of all social grades, the numerically small upper class has in the past yielded the largest proportion of eminent men of science, from the days when, in Britain, Napier and Bacon, Newton and Boyle, were contemporaries, till at least the last generation; the middle class yielding proportionally fewer, and the poor class by far the least of all. And as the principle of heredity entirely fails to explain the facts,† we are driven back once more

*M. de Candolle notes that while the Catholic Church has produced no great naturalists, and few of any grade, she can claim so large a number of astronomers, physicists, and mathematicians, that "one would say the Church has wished to repel the reproach made against her on the score of Galileo, by cultivating precisely his sciences".

†Galton admits ('Hereditary Genius,' p. 213) that "Newton's ancestry appears to have been in no way remarkable for intellectual ability". Boyle is the only case

to the conclusion that potential genius is probably about as frequent in one class as in another, and that it emerges in the ratio of its total opportunities.

That view, it may be pointed out, is in full harmony with the summing-up of M. de Candolle, who thus states the conditions which he finally finds to be favorable to the emergence of high *scientific* capacity:—

"1. A considerable proportion of persons belonging to the rich or well-to-do classes of the population, relatively to those who are obliged to work constantly for their living, especially by hand labor.

"2. An important proportion, among the rich or well-to-do classes, of persons content with their incomes, having a fortune easy to administer, and consequently content to occupy themselves with intellectual matters which 'do not pay'.

"3. An old intellectual culture, directed for several generations back toward real things and true ideas.

"4. Immigration of cultured foreign families, with a taste for non-lucrative intellectual tasks.

"5. The existence of a number of families with traditions favorable to the sciences and to intellectual occupations of all kinds.

"6. Primary and, above all, secondary and superior education, well organised, independent of political and religious parties, tending to stimulate research

of scientific genius in *his* numerous stock. The fact that Napier's father was Master of the Scottish Mint at sixteen, when it is alleged his son was born, proves only *con*tr favor. And Galton freely admits that "the fathers of the ablest men in science have frequently been unscientific" (p. 190).

and to encourage young men and specialists devoted to science.

"7. Abundant and well-organised material means for scientific pursuits (libraries, observatories, laboratories, collections).

"8. A public interested in things real and true rather than in things imaginary or fictitious.

"9. The liberty to announce and publish every opinion, at least on scientific subjects, without suffering inconveniences of any gravity.

"10. A public opinion favorable to the sciences and to those who cultivate them.

"11. Liberty to follow any profession, to avoid any, to travel, to avoid all personal service other than what is voluntarily undertaken.

"12. A religion laying little stress on the principle of authority.

"13. A clergy friendly to instruction for its own members and for the public.

"14. A clergy not restricted to celibacy.

"15. The habitual use of one of the three principal languages, English, German, or French. A well-diffused knowledge of these languages in the educated class.

"16. A small independent State or union of small independent States.

"17. Geographical position in a temperate or northerly climate.

"18. Nearness of civilised countries."

Comprehensive as is this estimate, it is perhaps too specially directed to the case of Switzerland, that being the country where, as M. de Candolle's statistics amply prove, scientific capacity has been developed in the largest proportion relatively to population. But any additions made to

his explanation would leave its essentials untouched; and it would need no great readjustment to make it cover the cases of literary, philosophic, and artistic ability. The principal addenda which suggest themselves to me are:—

(a) That the special cultivation of the sciences in Switzerland within the past century and a half is in a measure due to the conditions left by the old Calvinistic *régime*, which there deliberately crushed all the imaginative arts, as it did in Scotland. Intellectual curiosity played where it could.

(b) That the lack of important philosophers in Switzerland, at a time when such were arising in Britain, France, and Germany, was a result of the strong hold of the orthodox tradition even at a time when men were freely studying the physical sciences. Philosophy in the other countries was developed by the stimulus of scepticism.

(c) That smallness of a State is not essential to the abundant development of either science, art, or literature. It was not the smallness of Athens, compared with, say, Rome and Egypt, that determined Attic development. What is important is abundance of culture-contacts, which certainly have abounded in the case of Switzerland, in touch at once with France, Germany, and Italy. Holland, again, is a small State; but it has latterly

done proportionally less than France in the sciences, the arts, and in fine literature.

(d) *Relative lack of opportunity* for commercial expansion, *i.e.*, inducement to seek wealth rather than knowledge, is an important factor in the intellectual differentiation of, say, Switzerland and England. In Newton's day, England was scientifically far ahead of Switzerland. The later enormous expansion of English industry, through abundant coal and iron, made England pre-eminently a commercial country, where large incomes were the ideal for the middle and upper classes. The narrower industrial conditions in Switzerland‡ counted for more than mere family tradition in maintaining plain living and disinterested study. The conditions in Scotland last century closely resembled those of Switzerland; but commercial development has modified culture-history in Scotland as in England.

Taking these considerations with those adduced by Mr. Cooley and M. de Candolle, we get a pretty general view of the conditions of emergence for some of the most important forms of abnormal intellectual ability, and a pretty general refutation of Galton's teaching.

‡ About 1790, the Swiss population was 1,700,000; in 1836 it was 2,177,420; and in 1888 it had only increased to 2,933,334. This is a much slower rate of increase than that seen in Scotland, where the population in 1801 was 1,608,420, and in 1891 had increased to 4,025,647.

IV.

There remains, however, the criterion of individual cases, as against Galton's assumption that genius is a self-securing force. Mr. Cooley has pointed to two—Darwin and Thackeray. In the former, there was clearly needed the condition of a private income to permit of due leisure, and, further, the strictest economy of strength. In the latter, it seems to have needed the condition of pecuniary necessity to spur the artistic faculty into strenuous play. In all probability we should have had few or none of Thackeray's novels had his private fortune remained intact. Then in the case of Thackeray we have, in terms of Galton's formulas, capacity without zeal, and in the case of Darwin zeal without due physical strength. Darwin could never have done his work without his inherited means; and as a poor man's son, without help, he would certainly have remained obscure.

At this rate, then, we should have to strike off the list of geniuses an indefinite number of those who realise for us our notion of the species. Above all, we should be compelled to strike off the name of Shakspeare. Few who have closely studied the life of the latter, the typical man of genius, will dispute the proposition that, had he been able to make a good livelihood in his father's business, he would never have turned

actor or playwright. He happened to combine with a temperament and literary faculty of extraordinary plasticity, a thoroughly business-like attitude toward the main chance; securing his gains and his dues with scrupulous exactitude; writing nothing, save his sonnets, without a clear pecuniary motive; and giving up his literary career as soon as he had made a comfortable fortune. On the other hand, as his sonnets distinctly tell, he suffered enough in his life as an actor to make it impossible that he should have sought the stage had he not been driven by need; and had he not turned actor he would never have become a dramatist. In brief, Shakspeare untaught, unschooled, and living where players never came, would probably never have written a line; and Shakspeare well-to-do in Stratford would have felt no compelling necessity for self-expression, save perchance in forms even more factitious than "Venus and Adonis".

V.

It thus begins to appear that the aggressive and inevitable impulse to action or utterance, which Galton identifies with genius, is merely an occasional concomitant thereof. Some such impulse does appear, at the first glance, in the cases of Bacon, Newton, Pope, and many others. But in these cases, in turn, there is not the least

reason to suppose that, with an obscure birth, illiterate childhood, and a toilsome youth, the congenital faculty could ever have come to any such development as it actually chanced to attain under favorable conditions. On the contrary, a wide survey of literary biography entitles us to surmise that there have lived and died in toilsome poverty some potential Bacons and a few Shaksperes, several "mute, inglorious" Miltons, and many a Cromwell "guiltless of his country's blood".

Putting aside Homer as an unsolved problem, we are led to note, first, that a large part of Greek literature is the chance outcome of the possession of private means and literary gifts by the same persons. Herodotus, Thucydides, Aristotle, Plato, and Xenophon are cases in point. Aristotle and Plato might indeed have supported themselves by their lectures, given the necessary maintenance during their training time; but none of the others could conceivably have made a living by the sale of his writings. Demosthenes had a heritage to begin with. Socrates, if he is to be reckoned an author, proves the same point, having had to work as a statuary till he was helped by Crito, and put in the way of maintaining himself humbly as a teacher. Epicurus in turn had a good schooling, and either inherited some means or was early able to earn a

good livelihood as a philosophic teacher—a mode of life exceptionally favorable to literary production in the ancient world. Lucian is a somewhat obscure case; but at least he was apprenticed to a well-to-do uncle who was a sculptor, and was later enabled to become a lawyer. In that capacity he practised, and he clearly could not have lived on his book sales.

The drama, again, is a matter of civic evocation, and could not otherwise have existed. Dramatic genius would have remained merely potential in Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides but for the public institution and support of the theatre; and comedy likewise was an outcome of special local institutions. Had any, or all, of the great Greek dramatists chanced to be kidnapped and sold into Persian slavery in early youth, their genius could no more have come to light than could that of Mozart and Beethoven had they been born and bred in Constantinople. Reflection on such obvious truths would have precluded the formation of a great many generalisations as to "racial genius." Greek genius could emerge only when it was provided for.

In Rome the rule was the same. Lucretius had inherited means, as had Cicero, whose later wealth seems to have come mainly from legacies, and whose writings, apart from his orations, can have brought him no gains. Catullus, the most

lyrically inspired of all the Latins, was of a landed family, and wrote wholly for his own pleasure. Indeed, we gather from Martial that books—that is, manuscript rolls—sold in Rome for a few pence, a price that could barely pay for the labor of copying.* It is thus clear that we owe the works of Virgil to the fact of his inheriting the small patrimony which Augustus restored to him when it had been confiscated. The *Æneid* cannot be even considered as having been published in his lifetime. Of Horace, who on the confiscation of his father's estate contrived to buy a post as a Government clerk, it may be said that by his early verses he earned the estate which was presented to him by Mæcenæ; but the fact remains that first the office and later the estate were his sources of subsistence during his life as an author. Ovid, again, was rich; and Juvenal—who put as clearly as any man ever did the economic conditions essential to the manifestations of literary genius—was fairly so. Concerning Martial, it is not clear whether he was often paid for a panegyric epigram as such, or whether he depended on the general donations of his admirers. On either view he may be regarded as having earned his

* There is a good research on this subject in W. A. Schmidt's *Geschichte der Denk- und Glaubensfreiheit im ersten Jahrhundert*, 1847, Kap. 5.

living by his pen; but whether the transaction was a great gain to literature is a matter for energetic doubt.

Of the historians it is hardly necessary to speak. In the nature of things neither Sallust nor Livy, neither Tacitus nor Polybius, could have looked to historical study and composition as sources of income. In short, it holds good of the great mass of Roman literature that its existence is to be attributed to the coincidence, in a certain number of cases, of private means or acquired fortune for men who had literary gift or industry. Gift without fortune had almost no chance of earning subsistence: ninety-nine per cent. of the talent of the moneyless men must have come to nothing in such conditions. Plautus and Terence, indeed, did earn freely by their plays: here again the drama constituted an exception to the rule that held good in the literature written for reading—a fact arising out of the nature of the dramatic art, which can be practised from hand to mouth by its cultivators, was originally State-supported, and can generally count on a certain amount of gate-money. The world, broadly speaking, really has paid for its scenic entertainment, if not for the best of its book-culture as such; and as the entertainment has included the products of Æschylus and Aristophanes, Sophocles and Shakspeare, Molière and

Ibsen, the *contra* is not to be made light of. But as regards the problem in hand the inference is the same: unless special economic conditions are set up, potential dramatic genius comes to nothing.

VI.

In the mediæval period, printing being not yet invented, the economic conditions of literary production were very much the same as in ancient Rome. Thus the writings of Dante, Boccaccio, and Petrarch could not have been sources of income to them. In that age, and later, large prices were paid by rich amateurs for classic manuscripts, whence arose a great industry of forgery, which reached its high-water mark, perhaps, under the auspices of Annius of Viterbo, a Dominican monk, master of the Palace under Alexander VI. In 1498 Annius published a whole library of alleged exhumed classics, all forgeries, with forged commentaries superadded, the whole having been palmed off upon the trusting editor by unscrupulous or at least impecunious scholars. In that way probably a good many incomes, or fortunes, were earned during some centuries. But manuscripts of new books can have had no such selling value: the best that could happen to an author was that his work should recommend him to the patronage and

bounty of a prince or prelate or other wealthy amateur, as happened to Politian when he won the favor of Lorenzo de' Medici by his elaborate poem on a tournament in which Julian de' Medici distinguished himself in 1468. The Troubadours, again, figured as ministers of entertainment; and those of them who had need of pay would receive it on the same footing as minstrels and actors; so that not genius but birth on the one hand and economic demand on the other determined their performance. Dante, in turn, belonged to the monied class, and, though of all men of genius he had perhaps the strongest impulse to utterance, he owed to his social status the culture which made the utterance possible, and even the bitter bread of dependence which sustained him while he wrought his masterpiece. Born poor, he could never have been the Dante we know. Nor did the more fortunate Petrarch and Boccaccio, on the other hand, live by authorship, though their writings—the Latin compositions of Petrarch, that is, and the Italian tales of Boccaccio—doubtless helped them to their diplomatic employments and won them acclamation.

When we come down to Ariosto, whose *Orlando Furioso* was printed in 1516, and went through four editions in sixteen years, we naturally look for signs that the author's work enabled him to live. Inheriting little from his father, he

had entered the service of a rich Cardinal as secretary, and while in that employ he had worked at his epic for eleven years. But it does not appear that his book sales counted for much of his income ; for after quarrelling with his Cardinal he entered the political service of Alphonso I, Duke of Ferrara, passing from that department in his last years to that of controller of the Court Theatre. The duke's patronage may be regarded as the reward for the poem, but not otherwise did it maintain the poet. Nor was the case otherwise with Tasso, who, like Ariosto and Boccaccio and so many another, had to resist his father's desire to make a lawyer of him. Fathers in the past as in the present had abundant reason to regard literature as a poor profession ; and Tasso's father, a poet himself, was doubly entitled to his opinion. And though the son did on the score of his youthful poem *Rinaldo* obtain from Alfonso II of Ferrara a home and a revenue, in virtue of which he produced his drama of *Amyntas* and his epic of "Jerusalem Delivered," the well-known troubles of his life in the palace leave the paternal view well justified. In any case, Tasso's epic brought him no lucre. It was published during his confinement, without his consent ; and when he at length recovered his liberty it was to live out his life in perpetual embarrassment, despite the hospitality of many

admirers. It is part of literary history that in 1573, while he had his stipend from the Duke of Ferrara, his wardrobe was pawned; and in later life he had many opportunities of renewing that experience. The book trade of that day was not on such a footing that he could raise money on copyrights; and his career was not such as to lure to the lyre later men of genius who heard of it.

It is hardly necessary again to establish the fact that the leading prose writers did not make literature pay any better than did the poets. Machiavelli wrote his comedies and his novel *Belphégor* for his own pleasure during the period of his employ as State Secretary; and his *Prince* and his treatise on Livy were written in his latter years, not for sale, though he may have counted on their bringing him new political preferment. In short, in Italian as in Latin literature, the best products are found to be as a rule social windfalls, princely patronage serving in only a few cases to reward and sustain authors as such. It is not till we come to Metastasio, who produced opera librettos on a commercial footing, that we find anything like economic reciprocity between the writer and his audience; and in that case the literary product is of no permanent value.

The Economics of Genius.

VII.

In French literature of the modern or printing period, we early meet with prospects or possibilities of commercial stimulus and reward for authors; but here again it turns out that save in drama the chance of payment counts for nothing in production until we arrive at the age of the novel. Villon, Rabelais, and Montaigne, in their different ways, represent literary gratuities to society. The "sad, bad, glad, mad" lad, the first finely inspired poet who wrote in French, may at times have made a little money by the manuscript of his ballads, but never enough to keep him long from the necessity of thieving. On the other hand, it was the chance of his clerkly training that alone made his gift demonstrable. Rabelais, also indebted to his good schooling for his chance of self-revelation, might conceivably have made a good deal of money by the sale of his books, which went quickly and far, but he never for a moment depended on them. As doctor, as professor, as curé, he had his professional earnings or his regular stipend. Montaigne was a country gentleman of good estate, else had we never had his immortal essays, the fruit of comfortable and bookish leisure.

Corneille and Racine, ministering to their day by way of scenic entertainment, could in part live by their returns from the theatre; but even they

were glad of regular pensions from the Crown. Molière, like Shakspeare, had a direct share of the profits of the theatre—a far steadier source of income than the fees of a mere author.

Aside from the drama, the best French literature of the classic period continues to depend mainly on coincidences of capacity with unearned income or official provision. Bossuet, placed and paid as a bishop, chanced to have uncommon literary gift, whence his published orations and treatises; Pascal, belonging to a well-to-do family, could not otherwise have found strength at once to maintain and to reveal himself. As already noted, it is with the rise of the novel that there emerges the beginning of a class who really live by literature as apart from drama, Le Sage being the most famous type; and the mass of high-class fiction, in proportion to the total output, seems from the first to have been relatively small. Montesquieu, being a man of means and official position, belongs to the class of the gratuitous authors. Even Voltaire, who might have made large sums by his works despite constant piracy, and who could probably have lived by play-writing alone, relied mainly on non-literary sources of income after the English subscription for his *Henriade*, and wrote for influence, not for profit. With a less fortunate start in life, he would indeed have figured, in

all likelihood, as a man of uncommon ability, since he had in rare combination the gifts of making money and of brilliant speech, but had he been born poor he would probably have been made a priest, or become a man of business—anything but the Voltaire we know. Diderot is the first distinguished French man of letters who earned a living as did Goldsmith and De Foe in England by a general literary activity; and much of his work is impermanent, while much was mere translation. The steadiest source of his income, too, was the *Encyclopédie*, on which he worked as editor, sub-editor, adaptor, and proof-reader, as well as contributor; and his earlier earnings from other sources were sufficiently precarious.

Mr. John Morley, who as a self-supporting man of letters has had occasion to think on these matters, has noted in a passage of his "Diderot" the difficulty of existence for the great majority of writers of the middle decades of last century. The second sentence is an exaggeration, as it overlooks Montesquieu, Hume, Helvétius, Burke, Middleton, and some others; but it is substantially just:—

"The man of letters shortly before the middle of the century was as much of an outcast and a beggar in Paris as he was in London. Voltaire, Gray, and Richardson were perhaps the only three conspicuous writers of the time who had never known what it was

to want a meal or go without a shirt. But then none of the three depended on his pen for his livelihood. Every other man of that day whose writings have delighted and instructed the world since, had begun his career, and more than one of them continued and ended it, as a drudge and a vagabond. Fielding and Collins, Goldsmith and Johnson in England; Goldoni in Italy; Vauvenargues, Marmontel, Rousseau in France; Winckelmann and Lessing in Germany, had all alike been doubtful of dinner, and trembled about a night's lodging. They all knew the life of mean hazard, sorry shift, and petty expedient again and again renewed. It is sorrowful to think how many of the compositions of that time that do most to soothe and elevate some of the best hours of our lives, were written by men with aching hearts in the midst of haggard perplexities. The man of letters, as distinguished alike from the old-fashioned scholar and the systematic thinker, now first became a distinctly marked type."

The last quoted sentence unconsciously emphasises the point. Literature as a profession, save in the department of systematic novel-writing and play-making, is typically impecunious. Adam Smith in his day spoke of "that unprosperous race of men commonly called men of letters", going on to account for their poverty by an explanation which proves merely his own determination to recognise no economic principle save *laissez-faire*. Smith's theory was that men of letters were poor because there were too many of them, and that there were too many of them because they had generally been educated "at the public expense" to be clergymen—

a twofold fallacy. Men of letters were and are as a rule educated not otherwise than lawyers and doctors and multitudes of men of business; and their frequent difficulty in finding a market is not a matter of their competing to supply a given article in excess of the demand, but of their rising above or falling below the grade of article commonly wanted. And as Mr. Morley's list suggests, the cause of lack of demand is as often the temporary superiority as the inferiority of the product. Of course the men who succeed, even in fiction, often begin faultily, and learn mastery through failure. But the trouble is that the original literature which instead of amusing instructs, unless it be made for use in schools and colleges, is in the nature of things likely to pay ill or at best to pay slowly. Diderot got a French bookseller to pay Condillac a hundred crowns for the MS. of his book on Sensation; but even that exceptional windfall would hardly support Condillac during the time needed to think out such a treatise.

French literature since Diderot's day, while it does not reverse the generalisations above arrived at, exhibits the play of new social tendencies, since the "gratuitous" element tends to come from new sources, and the earning power of serious literature has certainly increased. The higher journalism, to begin with, offered

gradually enlarging financial opportunities to men of letters; and La Harpe's success showed that criticism and lecturing could be profitably combined. Sainte-Beuve later earned a sufficient income by steady hard work as a critic on a high class journal; and he was only the most famous of a considerable tribe. Hugo from his youth up must have had a considerable revenue from his books, the poetry as well as the prose. Chateaubriand and Madame de Staël, though not depending on literature for a living, gained a good deal by it, as did Lamartine and De Musset; while Balzac and George Sand, the former with difficulties of his own making, lived entirely by the writing of fiction. And since that group passed away, whether it be that the competition of specially trained men has tended to drive the men of cultured leisure out of the field, or that the mere increase in the variety of pleasure now open to men of means and education draws the leisured class away from literary work, it appears that it contributes progressively less of permanently valuable matter to literature.

Guizot, for instance, after working hard as a journalist, and translating Gibbon, became a professor of history, and later held a series of political offices. Cousin was successively a Sorbonne professor, a Councillor of State, and a Minister of Public Instruction. Thiers sup-

ported himself as a journalist while writing his histories. Michelet, after holding minor teaching posts, received a Government office and a professorship. Duruy was successively an inspector, a Normal College lecturer, a professor of history, and a Minister of Public Instruction. Henri Martin, who inherited a great library as well as private means, is the only eminent French historian of his day who does not seem to have needed to earn a salary; and he received a prize of 20,000 francs from the Institute. Taine does not seem to have been at any time indigent. Renan, who latterly earned large sums from a number of his books, had at first to be helped by his sister, then won money prizes, and later held a series of official positions apart from his professorship of Hebrew, without which he could hardly have done his work. Of all the famous French publicists of the century, only Proudhon seems to have lived long by his pen alone; and he, always poor, did much journalism, besides taking to business at one period for five years. It thus appears that while the rewards for serious book-writing have increased, they are still quite insufficient to yield a maintenance, save after a number of years of great cumulative success. Such literature then remains in the main a result of special economic conditions, though it latterly comes more often from professors and

officials and journalists than from men of inherited fortune.

VIII.

It remains only to take a rapid view of our own literature, by way of checking the generalisations reached in the survey of others. Taking Chaucer as our starting point, we at once recognise the accidental conditions of his performance, which was accomplished in the leisure of a life either salaried in court service or sustained, albeit poorly, by court patronage. There was no other payment worth speaking of for the 'Canterbury Tales', and but for the support in question they would never have been written. In the early part of the printing period, too, the important author is always either possessed of means, however small, or supported otherwise than by the sale of his books. Spenser throughout his life was in one or the other case. Bacon, with all his literary and scientific enthusiasm, could never have produced his works but for private means and the income which came to him as a result of his legal training. By the drama, indeed, in England as elsewhere, educated men could live, but not well; Shakspeare being, in virtue of his partnership in a theatre company, the one Elizabethan dramatist who made a fortune, or even a good livelihood. Ben Jonson was impecunious

to the end: the others were chronically in want. Away from the drama, no income accrued to authorship. Hobbes was throughout his life maintained otherwise than by his books, his place in the Devonshire family giving him his leisure and his security during many years. Concerning Milton, we have the significant record that for the first edition of 'Paradise Lost' the publisher paid him £5. Locke, again, must have received a good deal more for his writings; but he, too, always had other sources of income, without which he could not possibly have done his work.

In the eighteenth century, however, we find arising in England, earlier than in France, incomes earned in the way of higher journalism and *belles lettres* apart from fiction and drama; and now the theory of the self-assertive omnipotence of genius becomes more plausible. Still, the thesis remains a fallacy. Swift, the greatest of the literary tribe in his day, had his professional income behind him; but De Foe, Addison, Steele, as later Goldsmith and Johnson, made more or less regular gains by essay-writing and hack-work. Pope, on the other hand, though like Dryden he made a good deal of money by his verse-translations as well as by his poetry, had private means, which took the place of Dryden's pension. Thomson had a pension

and a sinecure, though he too earned money by poems and plays. The philosophic work, of course, continued to depend on special economic provision. Berkeley and Butler subsisted as bishops; Hume had various non-literary sources of income; Smith and Reid were university professors, and Smith was, further, privately pensioned. And though Robertson and Gibbon earned large sums by their histories, as did Hume, they could never have written them had they not had, the one a private fortune and the other an academic post. It is still in fiction and drama and hack-work and the higher journalism that incomes are earned, and these not large or steady, as in the case of Goldsmith, Johnson, and Fielding, of whom the first was always embarrassed; while the second, after all his toils, was glad of a pension; and the third was glad of a magistracy. The prosperous Richardson, on the other hand, had a printing business behind him; and Sterne, though very successful as a writer, held one or more church-livings from the time of his leaving college till his death.

Broadly speaking, we may say that in English as in other literatures, poetry, philosophy, history, and science have been given to the world not for bread and butter, but by way of disinterested contribution from men who were enabled to live, well or ill, on other bases than

those of book sales. Even Burns had done the bulk of his best work before he printed any, though he got £500 from his first edition; and he was able to refuse payment for the scores of songs he contributed to a publisher's collection, though at the end he had to cancel this refusal. As regards Burns's opportunities, be it repeated, it is a great mistake to regard as uncultured. His father, though poor, was a man of strong literary tastes and intellectual capacity, who gave his children not only an exceptionally good schooling for their station, but a lead to literature such as few children receive in any class. And Burns suffered both as poet and man for his lack of financial advantages, as compared with contemporary poets. Chatterton's life and death tell a similar tale. Cowper never supported himself. Crabbe was provided for by a benefice.

The lives of men of science from Boyle and Newton onwards exhibit the same law. Dalton was first a schoolmaster, later a professor in a dissenting college, then again a tutor in mathematics, before he became secretary of the Manchester Philosophical Society. Davy was successively a lecturer and a professor; and married a woman of fortune. Banks inherited private means. Black and Cullen were university professors; Hunter supported himself by medical instruction and practice. Burke seems

to have been in large part supported by his aristocratic patrons till in his last years he received a pension, and withal he was always embarrassed. Sir William Hamilton, like Hume, had private means; and for the last twenty years of his life was a university professor.

The literary biography of the present century accumulates the proof to any desired extent. All of the distinguished poets, to begin with, were so provided for that they had a leisurely youth, and a good schooling. Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Shelley, and Byron were one and all enabled to write their poetry by the chance of their having unearned incomes—Wordsworth from a legacy and a Government sinecure; Coleridge during many years from a private pension; Keats from his small inheritance; Shelley and Byron from their family fortunes. Even Southey, the most industrious writer of his day, had private help in his youth, and had poet laureate's pay during most of his literary life; Charles Lamb lived by his fairly easy clerkship in the India House; and De Quincey's private means supported him till he was nearly forty. Similarly Tennyson, who in the latter half of his life had a large income from his books, was in the first half poor on private means and a pension; Browning never needed to earn a shilling; Arnold, after starting with

educational advantages, was able to secure a measure of leisure, though all too little, as a school inspector; while William Morris had inherited means, and added to them in business. Even Scott, though he latterly earned great sums by his books, began life in an easy fashion as a practising advocate and a law court official, and held his sheriffship while he wrote his novels; and Jane Austen and the Brontës were able to try novel-writing from the shelter of their homes. In fiction Thackeray and Dickens and George Eliot certainly succeeded financially from the first; but with the serious writers, as in previous ages, the case was otherwise. Bentham and Hallam had private means; James Mill, after hard times, secured a good post in the India office, held after him by his son John; Carlyle, after saving a little money as a school-master, and meeting luck in getting good pay for long essays in the quarterlies, had his wife's little heritage to help him till his books brought him a steady income; Ruskin, whose private works latterly yielded him a large revenue, had his private fortune to proceed upon, as had Buckle; and Macaulay had his official posts in England and India before he wrote his history. Clinton had inherited means; Ricardo was a lucky stockbroker; Grote a leisured banker; Thirlwall a bishop; Milman a dean. It

is needless to swell the list. We know that Mr. Spencer's performance was made possible only by his small private means, and, at a critical time, by help from America. Darwin could never have done his scientific work had he been obliged to earn his living; and Huxley and Tyn-dall, like Kelvin and Jevons, subsisted long by their salaries as instructors. How letters have fared in the United States we have already seen.

To sum up, when we look at literature in any of the leading nations we find it self-supporting only in the departments of fiction and drama, and, let us add, the higher journalism, the lower journalism being of course outside the line of definition. Thus it comes about that in England to-day the word "author", as a special designation, means "novelist" far more often than anything else, since the writers of other books must in most cases be officials or professors or professional or business men, or possessors of private means. The few who, holding no offices, live by literature other than fiction and drama, usually eke out their incomes, it is believed, by journalism or lecturing, or by acting as advisers to publishers; that is to say, by happening to combine with "genius" faculties of another order, depending upon the chance of a good educational start. So that still, as of old, we owe our output in history, in philosophy, in social

and natural science, and partly in criticism, to the chance combination of zeal and productive capacity by men who either earn their living in other ways or have no need to earn it at all. Even the successful Stevenson was past thirty, with domestic responsibilities, before he could support himself, and had he been less fortunately born might never have been heard of. It is true that latterly some of the leading younger poets—as Mr. Watson, Mr. Le Gallienne, Mr. Davidson, Mr. Yeats, Mr. Henley, and Mr. Bliss Carman—have lived by their pens, thus contrasting rather remarkably with their predecessors. But none of these, probably, makes by his mere poetry the income of an average middle-class shopkeeper; so that for them too, as for their forerunners, poetry must have been a passion and not a pot-boiler.

IX.

In fine, the individualistic society of the past, so often credited with creating conditions favoring the "survival of the fittest", in the intellectual as in the physical life, is seen rather to have fixed conditions which theoretically are almost the least favorable to a maximum (numerical) development of potential mental faculty. It has set up circumstances under which from a small minority only of the total population at any

given moment could its best intellectual workers be drawn; and its methods have tended, in a degree that seems to be progressive in each civilisation after a certain stage, to keep latent even a large part of the capacity of this small minority. Hereditary opportunity of doing well in business keeps dumb, presumptively, the middle-class Shaksperes, no matter how few: the inheritance of fortunes keeps free of due pressure the upper-class Thackerays, perhaps a less rare variety.

I have said that, as time goes on, the class with inherited incomes appears to be yielding proportionally less and less intellectual service to society. This seems to hold good in England and the United States alike, since in both cases, especially the latter, the idle class has increased in number during the past fifty years, while its intellectual output has decreased, at least as regards the higher grades. I do not confidently undertake to explain this in terms of social conditions. M. de Candolle's specification of "family traditions" here suggests itself; the "new rich" being so often differently situated in this respect from the former rich, whose scions in many cases have had to revert to commerce. Again, some allowance ought perhaps to be made for the fact that an enormous amount of knowledge, scientific and historical, has been amassed within the past hundred and fifty years,

and that a mind which fifty years ago might have been moved to write would to-day decide that enough had been written. But on the whole I strongly lean to the conclusion that the main factor at work is the growing power of civilised society, as a sphere of entertainment and enjoyment, to absorb the interests of leisured men. Since railways have so immeasurably facilitated travel; since European peace has so enormously encouraged it; since the opening up of North America, much of Asia, and much of Africa to the ordinary rich traveller has so vastly increased his field; since amusement of every description and physical comfort in every direction have been so remarkably developed; and since the literature of enjoyment, from the superior newspaper with its short tale and poem and its anecdotal biography to the masterly social novel and the entertaining history, has been so bewilderingly multiplied, the man of private means has been subjected to an incalculable amount of invitation—not to say temptation—to rest content with enjoying the good things of life. Such a process took place in the society of ancient Rome, from 100 B.C. till the end of the Empire; and the modern development of wealth and luxury has far exceeded anything in antiquity. In the Dark and Middle Ages, men turned to war through sheer need of excitement. After

the height of the feudal period, in the north as previously in the south, we find the men of the class which of old had been idle or military turning to literature and science—witness More, Montaigne, Bacon, Worcester, and Napier. When the middle military period of civil wars had led to that of quietude and standing armies, we find aristocrats taking to literature anew—witness the titled authors of the Restoration, and the generations of De Retz and Saint Simon, Shaftesbury and Bolingbroke, followed by those of Montesquieu and Condorcet, Hume and Gibbon, the Humboldts and Alfieri, Chénier and Shelley, De Maistre, De Tocqueville, De Belloguet, Mahon, Von Ense, and Fustel de Coulanges. But the literary aristocrat promises to disappear, as do the divers types of Bacon, Goethe, Grote, Guizot, Humboldt, and Buckle, and, for different reasons, those of Milman, Thirlwall, and Stubbs. Of all which the moral is that, if society in the strictly industrial period does not deliberately construct an evocative machinery to do well and systematically what the institution of inherited wealth sometime did imperfectly and at random, it will forfeit its birthright in an even larger degree than did the military and semi-military societies of the past.

Genius is conditioned economically, morally, and socially. Conditions which are partly favor-

able to it are seen to disappear by economic evolution even in an age of moral progress; and unless to the achieved moral and scientific progress be added a social science which takes intelligent heed of such changes, there may follow manifold retrogression.

POSTSCRIPT.—Since the preceding pages went to press there has been published the Autobiography of Mr. Herbert Spencer, from which it appears that the statement on p. 44 is partly inaccurate. He had been enabled by the funds which came to him on the death of his father to resume his work while the American fund was being collected; and he had further had generous offers of help in England, notably from Mill. But the Autobiography now makes it clear that his work as a whole could never have been accomplished save for the successive legacies which came to him from his uncles, and his inheritance from his father. That is to say, the 'Synthetic Philosophy' was socially a windfall, turning on a set of economic accidents. There could be no better confutation of his own social prescription, which would leave literary, scientific and artistic production wholly to the play of such chances, thus virtually restricting it to the small minority of the middle and upper classes.

THE POSSIBILITIES OF WOMEN.

It seems possible to arrive at a more practical estimate of the intellectual capacities of women than those which mainly make up the long dispute on the subject. Certainly it is easy to take more scientific means of reaching such an estimate than are taken by most of the disputants. Considering the scope of the problem, it is commonly solved with an undue facility; few men thinking it necessary to cast a glance beyond their private experience of feminine character; while few women, perhaps, realise how much more weight attaches to arguments from historical experience than to intuitions either for or against. And men's bad logic, being more systematically and dispassionately bad than women's, is apt to carry the day. For instance, such a sympathetic and really fair-minded observer as Mr. Howells is held by many to have confuted the pretensions of women to be doctors and shopkeepers by two skilful dramatic studies, in one of which a girl is shown to be unequal to the strain of doctoring, as a second girl is shown to be unequal to the strain of a millinery business in the other. The first comment which falls to

be made is that many women successfully stand the strain of running a millinery business; and that a considerable number of women seem to succeed as doctors. From Mr. Howells' point of view it will be answered to this that his girls fairly represent the feminine average. But it seemingly does not occur to the champions of that side that the average man too is ill-fitted to be a doctor, and none too well fitted to keep a millinery business going while suffering from disappointment in love. These things being so—and Mr. Howells, I think, would not dispute that they are so—there is really no more sociological force in the phenomena of the collapse of Dr. Breen's practice and the failure of Helen Harkness's bonnet-business than in the more strictly historical statistics of the bankruptcy courts and of the examinations of the medical schools—to say nothing of the occasionally avowed opinions of old and young medical hands on the qualifications of their rivals. Of course, Mr. Howells may not have meant anybody to infer from the case of Dr. Breen that woman in the abstract is not fitted for doctoring. But that is how "the woman question" is commonly reasoned upon. Nobody supposes that the case of Charles Bovary, as presented by Flaubert, proves the medical incapacity of man in the abstract: but "with women it is different". The claims of

women, as it used to be with the French Revolution, are held to be best disposed of by anecdotes.

Broadly speaking, men tend to misjudge the possibilities of women as nations in the lump tend to misjudge each other. There are two ways in each case. Most of us start with the general premiss of the superiority of our own nation, and proceed to point out in detail the inferiorities of the other. A few of us are more given to seeing the inferiority of our own people in the things we care most about. A deliberate attempt to arrive at an impartial view of the subject by means of exact tests and precise evidence is as rare a thing in literature as the first-named course is common. The first and most fatal source of fallacy in the matter is the primeval tendency to reason from particulars to generals. As the most salient particulars in life all round are the shortcomings—to put the matter in what English people call an Irish way—we are very apt to get a notion of any foreign people in terms rather of their more common faults and deficiencies than of their gifts and virtues. We rarely stop to strike averages. When we see rudeness in Germany and excitement in France, we are not anxious to calculate out the precise proportion of such exhibitions in our home and foreign experience. Rather, when we read a dull German book or a flimsy French one, we

proceed to associate dullness and flimsiness respectively with our simple conceptions of two great nations, extending our charity where it had hitherto been less indiscriminately given—to wit, at home.

Somewhat so it is with the common run of male judgments on the qualifications of women for this or that branch of male activity. We have all seen women who could not do properly what they tried: and we have all been struck by the number of things they hardly ever try to do. And the confidence with which the average conservative male argues the general unfitness of women in certain directions from their failures, is only surpassed by the confidence with which some more select types argue the unfitness of women in other directions from their not having tried at all. Yet it is one of the hardest worn commonplaces of the pulpit and the parlor that frustration and error are the general lot of "man": and it is one of the first statistical certainties that in every single form of human activity high competence is the exception and partial incompetence the rule.

If, then, we are to improve on the customary irresponsible estimate of women's potentialities, we must employ two logical safeguards against fallacy. We must supersede private experience of women's capacity by generalised historical

evidence; and we must interpret the historical evidence in the light of the principle of averages—that is to say, with an eye to the proportion of cases in which capacity of any kind appears in men.

II.

Lest we should open the way gratuitously to the insinuation of false ideals, let us not begin by citing the familiar evidences as to the much closer approach to equality of physical endurance between the men and women of barbarous races than between the sexes in the higher civilisations. The modern issue can be more directly approached by considering *seriatim* the steps which have actually been taken by women in modern times towards equality of opportunity with men. And the first noticeable step, as it happens, has set up one of the fairest of the available tests.

(1) In the time of Shakspeare, as everybody knows, there were no women-actors. His women characters, in drawing which he first conspicuously excelled his rivals, were all played by boys or young men. When, in the reign of Charles I, women for the first time appeared on the English stage, they were hooted and pelted by outraged masculine sentiment, which felt its delicacy wounded by seeing a female instead of a male

in women's clothes, and its judgment revolted by such an unnatural extension of woman's sphere. Still, the women continued to act; and it is a remarkable circumstance that, ever since, there have been just about as many good actresses as actors: though perhaps the number of actors is rather larger than that of actresses, as distinguished from dancers. Giving the men the benefit of the doubt, and assuming that the numbers are roughly about the same, we find that the proportion of high capacity in the two sexes is very much the same. Ever since Nell Gwynne we seem to have had as much histrionic genius in the one sex as in the other. In the last century in England, we have Mrs. Siddons against Edmund Kean; Helen Faucit and Fanny Kemble against Charles Kean and Macready; and so on. There have been, perhaps, more eminent comedians than comediennes, but this is to be explained in terms of the fact that farcical parts can be better enjoyed when played by men than when played by women, and are much oftener written for men. As regards the higher comedy, the women seem to have the advantage. In France the balance has been much the same. In our own or the last generation, Rachel stood at the head of tragedy; the Sara Bernhardt of twenty years ago may weigh against Got in the higher comedy; and Rejane to-day may com-

pare with Coquelin. And Duse is certainly not a less great artist than Salvini. I make the comparisons broadly, leaving it to every playgoer to fill out a list of equalities from his special recollections. The main point is that it is not disputed that women in general act as well as men: it is even admitted by some that in the average, setting aside the "stars" of both sexes, they act better. But supposing the sexes to be broadly on an equality, we come to this: that in one of the most important of the intellectual arts, an art to which they were only admitted, among the moderns in Europe, some two hundred and fifty years ago, they have all along shown at least an equality of capacity, number for number.

(2) When a point like this is proved, the opponents of women's claims are apt to take the course of arguing that acting is an art to which women are *better* adapted than men, like—well, like sewing and knitting. It is something that the view of woman's sphere should thus be modified in two hundred years. But let us take the next sociological test that offers itself. In the Elizabethan period, what instrumental music there was seems to have been mainly in the hands of men. Certainly there was no such proportional cultivation of music by women as occurs to-day in most civilised countries. At some

point between Milton's day and Tennyson's, the influences which kept women in the middle class occupied mainly with embroidery, scandal, jelly-making, and other household cares, were overbalanced by influences which set them playing some musical instrument and drawing or painting in water colors. The theory of woman's sphere was thus once more silently recast; and women were held to be specially adapted to exercises which formerly had not struck anybody as their appanage. And nowadays, whatever may be thought of their power to excel, nobody supposes that women are not as well fitted as men to learn singing and drawing and piano-playing.

(3) But we shall be challenged to deal with women's power to produce or create in the arts. Let us then look historically into that. In Shakspeare's day English women wrote practically nothing, whether in poetry or in prose. In the seventeenth century Mademoiselle Scudéri wrote large romances in France; but in England we have no memorable woman novelist before Aphra Behn (1642-1689). Yet since that time we have had not only an ever-increasing production of novels by women, but an ever-advancing tendency towards a general equality of admitted genius with male novelists. In the nineteenth century the progress becomes obvious. Be-

ginning with Jane Austen, who in her own *genre* is a more original and a more perfect artist than Scott; and passing over the many successful women novelists who do not remain famous, we have Charlotte and Emily Brontë to compare with Dickens and Lytton; Mrs. Oliphant to compare with Trollope; and George Eliot, who, if much less of a plastic genius than Thackeray, was much more of an intellectual force. It is extremely difficult to get statistics as to the numbers of the two sexes who in our own generation have written prose fiction; and I am loth to offer a mere conjecture; but I think it will be found true that despite the largeness of the number of women who now write novels in England, there are still not so many of them as of men novelists. Assuming the numbers, however, to be about equal, as we did in the case of the players, we find that the women fairly hold their ground. If they were on the whole inferior it would not be surprising when we consider that the normal preparation for the writing of good novels includes a wide knowledge of life and a training in the art of writing, both of which women still obtain less frequently than men. As a matter of fact, however, the women make about as many new successes as the men. Setting aside the older reputations, there have not been, I think, among the male fictionists of Eng-

land and America, more than six who during the past thirty years have each made a more notable mark as beginners than Olive Schreiner, Mary Wilkins, "John Oliver Hobbes", Mrs. Woods, Mrs. Steele, and Mrs. Ward.

In France, again, where there are relatively so few women writers, out of the few who have attempted fiction we have two such notable names as Madame de Staël and George Sand. If new names of equal distinction do not arise, we are clearly not entitled to say that it is because of incapacity in the sex. The explanation lies in the success with which the movement for the emancipation of women has thus far in France been thwarted. There is really not a sufficient number of freely educated Frenchwomen to give a fair chance for the uprising of a good novelist among them. The French ideal of conventional education for girls; the institution of the dowry; and the strong pressure against all freedom of life for women save in the direction of breach of the marriage tie, all tend to keep Frenchwomen out of literature, without giving any proof that they could not excel in it in the normal proportion of cases if they tried.

(4) From prose fiction we naturally turn to poetry. Here again we find that the widening of feminine culture in our own century has been followed by a large output of notably good verse

by women. They do not, it is true, produce as many poets of the first rank; and it is not very difficult to see why. The main successes in poetry, from Burns to Watson, have been attained in the expression of strong amatory passion or strong humanitarian feeling, or in choice verbal art; and in the two former directions women have been till lately repressed by the whole weight of public opinion, while for the last they are only latterly receiving due preparation. Any woman who should have ventured on the more moving themes of Shelley and Byron in their day would have run risks of worse insult than was put upon Charlotte Brontë when she published 'Jane Eyre'. Even at this moment the leading woman-poet of last century, Mrs. Browning, is looked at askance by some men and some women because she published her own love experience in her 'Sonnets from the Portuguese'; as if a woman might not rightly do what a hundred men-singers have done without reproach. As regards humanitarian enthusiasm, on the other hand, the exclusion of women from responsible political life must decisively limit the number who throw themselves wholeheartedly into the greatest social interests. And finally, as regards technique, the very fact that poetry is for women an art so recently grappled with, prevents their measuring them-

selves just yet with the masters. Young men poets of capacity have a curious and critical eye to the technique of their great predecessors; and their work represents new developments of artistic consciousness. Women poets, on the contrary, are slow to think of any such rivalry. But when girls are as much encouraged as are boys to write verses, and to take a critical view of the craft of verse-writing—assuming these predilections to be regarded with approval by an enlightened posterity—their sex will in all probability produce as many poets of high rank as does the other. At this moment, the average of technical accomplishment among women-poets seems on a level with the masculine average. No doubt it may take generations of freer life and more valid culture to produce a woman-poet capable of ranking with the very greatest. Mrs. Browning's genius is somewhat too hectic, her mind too imperfectly balanced, to be put in competition with those of the great poets of the world, or even of her own day. The best poetry is peculiarly quintessential, and represents the aroma of much experience as well as much patient art. But Mrs. Browning's work, with all its flaws, perfectly suffices to prove that women can sound the great notes, and sound them greatly; and there are twenty women poets in America and England who during the past

twenty years have produced work in every way transcending that of Mrs. Hemans and other women who, in the first half of last century, were thought to do wondrous things. Given this continuous increase in the number of competent producers, we may count, by the usual rule of averages, on the appearance of a proportional number of geniuses.

(5) If the capacities of women can be thus vindicated in the branches of histrionic art, fiction, and poetry—and I do not think the foregoing estimates will be accused of extravagance—it would seem a little arbitrary to assume that in any other branch of intellectual or artistic effort they are generically incapable of success. But it is found that the wiseacres, and even the wise, at least the wiser wiseacres, find proof of such incapacity in the fact of women's not having yet conspicuously triumphed in any one field. When it is pointed out that women have amply succeeded in certain kinds of effort as soon as they have been free to make the effort in anything like as large a number of cases as men, the sagacious opponent points to the kinds of effort which they have *not* yet made in any large numbers, or with any notable success; and with a confidence of which Canute does not appear to have been guilty, pronounces that there women will never succeed. One is disposed at

this stage to cut the dispute short by an *argumentum ad hominem*, as thus: No Englishman has yet written a great symphony or a great opera; and no American has yet written a great symphony, a great opera, or a great tragedy: Is it then reasonable to infer that Englishmen and Americans respectively are generically incapable of these things? No one, probably, will affirm it; but by way of concession to one form of masculine weakness it seems expedient to offer a constructive as well as a destructive rebuttal of the fallacy in hand.

As thus: It is a matter of course that, in the gradual opening up to women of field after field of intellectual activity, they will as a rule move in the direction of least resistance: in other words, on the easiest roads; and will go the furthest where there is most encouragement. Thus, in the matter of acting, they went at once the whole way because there was little need for apprenticeship, a standing demand, and plenty of applause and payment for the gifted. Once actresses were tried, there had to be actresses; and they have always been abundantly forthcoming, from the lower class and the unclassed while acting involved social ostracism, from the middle class since the ostracism has begun to collapse. There has not, however, been a corresponding activity of women in the matter of

playwriting; and the inference is promptly drawn that women will not make dramatists.

The answer here is twofold. First, there *have* been successful women-dramatists. Mrs. Centlivre in the 18th century succeeded as a comedy-writer, some of her plays being playable still; and in the last days of didactic blank-verse-tragedy in England, Hannah More and Joanna Baillie succeeded about as well as anybody else. And that women have since been less frequently mixed up with the stage is not to their discredit either as dramatists or as critics of life. Since the days of blank-verse plays practically ended, modern playwriting has tended, at least in England, until the other day, to become at once more of a special craft and less of a serious intellectual product. The novel has in the latter respect relatively distanced it. Joanna Baillie's plays could compete with non-dramatic *belles-lettres* in their day; but already in Lytton's day the prose novel had become a more vital form of art than the prose play; and thus far it remains so, save in the almost solitary case of Ibsen. The English "revival" of the past twenty years does not at all alter the case. The best English play of the last ten years is not to be compared with the best novels in the matters of truth of character-drawing and naturalness of plot. Indeed, even in the strong hands of Ibsen the drama re-

mains relatively factitious, arbitrary, and unsatisfying as a picture of life in detail. The fact is that there is not a public for the best drama as there is for the best fiction; the theatre involving so much outlay that each play must appeal to a wide circle in any one locality if it is to succeed commercially, where the novel can find its buyers anywhere throughout a whole country. The acted drama in general is therefore almost inevitably a lower or less "serious" form of art than is the novel in general. Playwriting, further, is become much more of a special craft than formerly, involving in practice much personal connection with theatrical people—a way of life to which literary women can less easily take than literary men. Yet withal, a sufficient number of good plays are produced by women to prove that the mere concision of the dramatic form, of which they are often said to be incapable, is quite within their reach. Some really strong short plays by women have been produced in recent years in London; and such a play as the 'True Women' of the late Mrs. Edgren may be cited as a proof that a woman may do dramatic work of the most truthful and original kind, truer in color and truer in technique than ninety-nine out of a hundred current plays. Mrs. Edgren had the courage to make her play represent an unsolved and insoluble problem, letting the cur-

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tain fall on an unclosed situation—a stroke of fidelity to life which few men have ventured on before or since; and the play is finally literature, as Ibsen is literature, and as the works of Mr. Pinero and Mr. Jones, it is to be feared, are not.

(6) The same general conclusion is borne out by a survey of women's work in the plastic arts. From these, as from literature and music, they were substantially excluded till the seventeenth century; and even in the eighteenth the appearance of an Angelica Kaufmann was a sensation. In no other respect than this has there been a more extraordinary development in the nineteenth. Within even one generation the number of women art-students has probably multiplied tenfold; the standard of accomplishment has risen in nearly a proportionate degree; and in every Salon and every Academy exhibition there are pictures by women which most of the male exhibitors might be glad to sign. The women even make popular successes, second-rate successes, just as the men do. Mr. Ruskin, after dogmatically declaring that "no woman can paint", formally retracted before the work of Mrs. Butler, who could handle a battle-piece with a power not exhibited by her immediate male contemporaries of her own country. He might retract on better grounds in a score of later cases.

If, finally, it be argued that either in art or

in science women do not build up such permanent and progressive successes as a number of men have done; that they often fail to fulfil their early promise; and that their sex does not, like the other, present cases of genius forcing its way against all manner of obstacles, we have but to state the case scientifically in order to leave the truth of sex-potentiality unshaken. The differences between the conditions of the sexes, as regards intellectual and artistic performance, may be reduced to three sorts: (1) economic, (2) moral, (3) physical. That is to say, women in the average are still differently placed from man in that—

(1) They less often, number for number, are placed in the position of having to stake their whole career on their performance. More often they are led to regard a certain amount of successful work as enough, their families to some extent supporting them. That is to say, they compare in a large proportion of cases with the young men of private means, who seldom make great successes in the arts or in literature. And women feel the full economic difficulty of trying to make a living by superior production at a time when such production is being increased out of proportion to the economic demand. Thus it must needs be that many of them pass to the background, as wives or as dependent spinsters, after making a good show of industry and

capacity, just as scores of male art students have every year to take to business to maintain themselves. So that the intellectual and artistic faculty of the more dependent sex is *pro tanto* less nearly realised, and probably always will be, under an unmodified individualistic system. But the point of possibility remains clear.

(2) Despite much recent modification of social and personal conditions, women's life is still much less free than men's; and relative freedom of self-expression and self-development is a clear condition of the growth of power. Moral pressure of many kinds is still heavy on many, if not most, women who go out of the ancient paths traced for their sex. This holds even of the middle and upper classes: among the poorer, matters are much worse. From these it is almost impossible for a woman to make her way upwards in any sense save by marriage. A woman born, say, in the position of Burns, with a combination of his faults and his powers, would in the first place be almost sure to have less culture-stimulus—for Burns received such stimulus from his father in an unusual degree—and would in the next place be simply destroyed if she sought self-development on similar lines. Faults which blemish a man utterly ostracise a woman. And such faults often go with just that peculiarity of temperament which we call genius. In the case

of the more moral types, supposing a proportion of women of the working classes to possess such capacities as are seen in "self-made" men like Hugh Miller, Tyndall, Millet, and others who have risen from poverty to fame in art, science, or letters—they are sadly few at best—the conditions of working-class life are such that it would require in the women's case relatively more energy, more courage, more passion for study than in the men's, to resist the pressures of general and domestic custom, and of the special difficulties of the given pursuit. If Carlyle's sisters had had all his capacity, they certainly would not have been enabled as he was to develop it. To the aspiring boy there is a hundred-fold more outside encouragement than to the girl. Here again it is the external and not the internal factors that are determinant.

(3) There remains the factor of physique, so much discussed in recent years; so much obscured, like the others, by male bias. For many eminent males are and have been unfitted for fatherhood; but that is not held to be any argument against the course they have taken. As if we needed more mothers than fathers to continue the species; or as if the species were so infecund that all women had need give the main part of their lives to child-bearing in order to keep it from dwindling.

Behind the extravagance of the male demand for healthy mothers there remain two facts: that women are still imperfectly trained on the physical side as compared with men; and that their sex in any case carries with it a certain physical burden of disability, which reaches its height in the special period of maternity. But the first fact is merely a statement of a reason for reform; and the second is merely a reminder that women need not expect as a rule to excel men in athletics. Maximum muscular strength is not a condition of successful intellectual production. Ben Jonson seems to have been a much more powerful man than Shakspeare; Milton was no athlete; Pope was a life-long invalid; so was Cowper. Shelley, Byron, Coleridge, Keats, were not nearly up to the male average in health; and Darwin, Tyndall, and Huxley, like Spencer, suffered much from ill-health and overstrain. There is not the least reason, then, to doubt that if women in general give as much attention as men in general to their physical life, they will have in the average, for intellectual work, as much nerve energy (for the exercise of which, however, there are needed the proper moral and economic conditions) as men. A Cambridge professor, protesting against degrees for women, has lately been telling them to remember what superior health and strength were needed to

enable Sir Isaac Newton to do his work. That Professor appears to have forgotten the facts that Newton was a very sickly child; that in mature life he was for a period of some months *insane*, as a result of overstrain or unhealthy habits; and that thenceforth he was visibly past his best. Given the special brain capacity and the free exercise of it, many women could get as much out of life as Newton did. At this moment it would not be difficult to get a boat's crew or tennis-team of girls who could physically surpass such a group of distinguished contemporary males as Mr. Swinburne, Mr. Austin, Mr. Henley, and Mr. Meredith.

And when, finally, we remember how three of the women of the century who have most stood out in respect of quantity of original energy—Madame de Staël, George Sand, and George Eliot—combined the conditions of economic independence and moral freedom of life with (save, indeed, in the case of George Eliot, who had a large brain with hardly proportionate stamina) a certain comparative exuberance of physical energy, we begin to see connectedly and convincingly that if only these conditions are duly modified for the whole sex, the intellectual possibilities of women are very much as the possibilities of men, certain inferiorities being compensated by certain superiorities all round.

THE INERTIA OF THE ENGLISH UNIVERSITIES.

(1897.)

I.

FOR at least fifty years there has been chronic discussion on the need for reform in the English universities, and in that time two processes of legislative change have been carried through. There was the Act of 1854, which reformed the governing bodies and the close Fellowships, and went far towards abolishing religious tests. Concerning the operation of the Act, Mark Pattison could write in 1866 that "the last twenty years have seen more improvement in the temper and the teaching of Oxford than the three centuries since the Reformation."* Still, as Mr. Pattison's book abundantly showed, liberal-minded men found much need for further reform; and in 1877 there came another Act, enabling a body of Commissioners to redistribute college revenues, to the end of endowing new professorships, forming libraries and laboratories, and otherwise increasing the educational efficiency of Oxford and Cambridge. Under that Act many experi-

* 'Suggestions on Academical Organisation,' p. 24.

mental changes have been made, and still, year after year, the discussion proceeds, to the old tune that the English Universities are behind those of Germany, nay, in the last ten years, that they are behind those of the United States in point of practical efficiency. If it cannot now be said, as Sir William Hamilton said in 1835: "Compared with Oxford as it is, there is not a European university, out of England, where the circle of academical instruction is so small, and where the little taught is (in general) taught by so inadequate a teacher,"† at least what Renan wrote a generation ago is held to be in the main true to-day:—

"A German university of the lowest class, with its little, narrow ways, its poor professors, awkward and scared-looking, its pale and starveling *privatdozenten*, does more for the human spirit than the aristocratic university of Oxford, with its millions of revenue, its splendid colleges, its rich appointments, its idle Fellows."‡

This was admitted in England at the time by competent observers; at least, in 1850 the Oxford University Commission reported, among other things, that "the fact that so few books of profound research emanate from the University of Oxford materially impairs its character as a seat of learning, and consequently its hold on the

† 'Discussions,' 1852, p. 528.

‡ Cited by Pattison, p. 340.

respect of the nation."‡ And the verdict of Huxley in 1868 is no less emphatic:—

"I believe there can be no doubt that the foreigner who should wish to become acquainted with the scientific or the literary activity of modern England, would simply lose his time and his pains if he visited our universities with that object.

"And as for works of profound research on any subject, and, above all, in that classical lore for which the universities profess to sacrifice almost everything else; why, a third-rate poverty-stricken German university turns out more produce of that kind in one year than our vast and wealthy foundations elaborate in ten."*

Oxford has unquestionably improved much since 1850, but still it holds true that its intellectual output is trivially small in view of its resources. For specific proof of this we need but turn at random to any dozen of recent review articles in which the present state of the higher studies at the English universities is discussed by experts. Here, for instance, is an estimate of our position in the simple matter of the study of our own history:—

"We are allowing the foreigner to do the work which we ought to do ourselves. The best political History of England in the Middle Ages comes from Germany, the best account of the English Navy from America, the best monograph on Simon de Montfort from France, the best study on English Villeinage from Russia. The Anglo-Saxon laws have been almost

‡ *Id.* p. 153.

* Address on 'A Liberal Education and where to find It', 'Essays,' iii, 104.

monopolised by Germans and Americans; English commercial history has been left to a German. The best books on the Elizabethan novel, on Piers Ploughman, on English wayfaring life in the Middle Ages, have been from the pen of a talented and scholarly Frenchman. The English Record Office is far better known in Paris than it is in London. . . . Compared with the enormous volume of learned ink which France and Germany have poured out upon municipal institutions, our contribution to the subject appears infinitesimal. We have no one monograph on any reign in our mediæval history which can compare for scholarship and erudition with such a book, for instance, as Langlois's *Philippe le Hardi*, or with any volume of the *Jahrbücher* you may choose to take down from the shelves; and we are leaving the bibliography of our history to an American who received his training at Göttingen."[†]

And here is a similar testimony as to the English study of the English language and literature:—

"At the present time a scientific study of English philology and literature is absolutely impossible without a knowledge of German; the lecturer has at every turn to refer his hearers to books or articles written in that language." "A German, Sievers, has written the only really good Old English (Anglo-Saxon) grammar. The only Chaucer grammar worthy of the name was published in German by Ten Brink, to whom we owe the best history of our earlier literature down to the fifteenth century. The only two existing Middle English dictionaries were written by Germans. . . . The historical English grammars of Koch and Mätzner are indispensable to scholars."[‡]

[†] Herbert A. L. Fisher, on 'Modern Historians, and their Methods,' in *Fortnightly Review*, Dec., 1894, p. 814.

[‡] Prof. A. S. Napier, 'On the Study of English at the German Universities,' in the *Educational Review*, June, 1892, p. 68.

If such things can be said with substantial truth in regard to the poverty of our scholarly treatment of our own language, history, and literature, there can be small presumption that we stand any better in regard to any other of the higher studies which universities are supposed to promote. On that head it may suffice to cite the judgment of Professor C. H. Herford, of University College, Aberystwith:—

"I was once asked by a travelled and highly accomplished Cambridge don, far above the average in familiarity with foreign affairs, whether a man could study anything at Berlin which he could not study equally well at Cambridge. The question, put by such a man, revealed to me the distance which we have yet to travel. . . . It is not merely that the range of studies (at Berlin) is vastly greater; that, *e.g.*, Egyptology, which with us begins when the university course ends, is there a busily cultivated *Fach*; that French and German, and English itself, are taught with a comprehensiveness for which there is here not so much no talent as no scope. As machinery for training original workers, the German, and, indeed, the French, universities have admittedly no rival in ours."*

It is possible, of course, to exaggerate our deficiencies, or, at least, our inertia. Even since Professor Napier wrote, there has been produced Professor Skeat's really adequate edition of Chaucer, a performance fairly abreast of German and American research; though a few years previously the Professor had confessed to having

* Letter in *Academy*, January 2, 1892.

done much of his work in ignorance of much that had been done by Germans; and though Mr. Sweet had declared, in his *Second Middle-English Primer*, that in presenting a somewhat corrected text of parts of some of Chaucer's minor poems, he had "not attempted to forestall the inevitable German, who, it is to be hoped, will some day give us a critical edition of Chaucer."† After all we move; but the motion is sadly precarious, and in many directions there is none to be traced.

Let us take, for instance, the department of theology, in the widest sense of the term. It is commonly felt, and rightly, that the inactivity of our universities is due to their virtually ecclesiastical government. That subsists despite all reforms of the governing bodies.

"In Oxford no change can originate, no legislative enactment can be initiated except through the Hebdomadal Council, and . . . the Council has not been specially constructed to facilitate movement or progress. The Council, it is true, is an elective and representative body, but it cannot be said to represent . . . the great body of teachers and graduate students, professors and tutors . . . engaged in the direct service of the University and Colleges. The Council is elected by the body known as Congregation, and Congregation comprises all Masters of Arts resident within a mile and half's distance of Carfax. The parochial clergy and others resident in the town account

† Cited by Dr. Skeat in introduction to his edition of '*Chaucer's Minor Poems*' 1883.

for a good many votes, and those votes are apparently bestowed on strictly party lines. . . . In general if from any point of view a question seem to involve Church principles or College privileges, the decision is a foregone conclusion. In the triennial elections to the Council, such party considerations appear to predominate."†

Before 1854, of course, the clerical predominance was quite undisguised. Yet nothing is more certain than that in the absolutely clerical period the university did nothing to promote theological culture of any sort. Dr. von Döllinger, who knew the English universities well, and was in some respects strongly biased in their favor, wrote in 1866: "I agree with Voigt that an English theologian, who has regularly passed through his course at Oxford or Cambridge, is not really distinguishable from a Prussian graduate in philology."* But we have the most explicit English testimony on the subject in the late Mr. Thorold Rogers's work on Oxford studies:—

"Most people think that Oxford is a training school for clergymen. It is undoubtedly the case that by far the majority of Oxford graduates take holy orders, there being only 27 per cent. of its Masters of Arts

†R. W. Macan, on 'Oxford Prospects', in the *Educational Review*, November, 1891, p. 8. Compare Pattison, p. 30, as to the fashion in which the clerical element was foisted into the reformed constitution of 1854.

*Lecture on 'Universities Past and Present', English trans. 1867, p. 26.

who are not clergymen. But Oxford does not teach clergymen. Its instruction in theology is of the scantiest and most meagre order, comprising ordinarily such information as would be given by any Christian parent to the members of his household, and in the case of those who purpose entering the Church, the attendance on one or two courses of professional lectures. These are of very little profit, not because the professors may not be willing to extend the utilities of their office, but because attendance on these lectures is merely the compliance with a requisition on the part of bishops. Were it not for this episcopal rule, there would not be, I believe, half a dozen hearers to each of the four divinity professors. It is true, indeed, that one of the conditions of a degree is that professed members of the English Church should be able to translate the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles; but this is quite as much, or more, an examination in Greek, than in the contents of the narrative.*†

It seems pretty clear from all this that the clerical influence is essentially anti-educative, even in its own special sphere; and the utter dearth of even theological study among our professional theologians in the past goes far to explain how it was that when the theological schools of Germany were giving a new depth and exactness to all forms of religious research, those of England were represented by manifestoes of the most benighted orthodoxy, or at best by controversies over Puseyism and the secession of Newman. To get some idea of the absolute nullity of English religious scholarship, on the

† Thorold Rogers, 'Education in Oxford,' 1861, pp. 6, 7.

side of the higher criticism, down till recently, it suffices to look to the critical sources and authorities of such a work as 'Supernatural Religion'; now some twenty-two years old. Not one in ten is English; outside of Germany, there are even more French than English references; and one of the few English authorities frequently cited is Dr. Donaldson, who belongs to Scotland. To be sure, there are to be named, on the opposite side, such English theologians as the late Bishop Lightfoot, Dr. Westcott, and Dr. Sanday, all accomplished scholars, of whom the first has even recovered some of the lost credit of English Churchmen as authoritative archæologists; and there is Dr. Hatch, more original and important than any of these, and therefore (we may say) without proper preferment in his own church. He is the exception, not the type; and when we consider the type the fact faces us that English clerical scholarship is officially unprogressive and anti-rational, even when it is technically strong. It sometimes plumes itself on being more accurate in its Greek than are the Germans, but it has no eye for the application of classical knowledge to great issues. The leading German and French students have opened up new lines of historic comprehension; the mass of the English, trained in the English clerical atmosphere, are immovable and obscurantist, or, at best, timid

manipulators of the belated liberal ideas that have reached them from Germany. Thus nearly all progress in religious criticism is in England forced on the Church from the outside, while in Germany it has been promoted by the theological schools themselves. Of course, it can be questioned whether the latter thus serve the cause of the creed they profess to sustain; but there can be no question about their relative breadth and intellectuality. Our best workers in the past have been those who labored patiently over details of text, as Gresswell and Scrivener, Westcott and Hort; workers like Baur and Volkmar, Zeller and Schwegler, we have not possessed. Even Hatch deals but indirectly with fundamentals. In this country there is only now being forced on the religious mind a quasi-liberal view of all religious development in the light of modern Oriental research, whereas in Germany such views were put forward twenty years ago in the name of religion, and even of revelationism, in such works as the 'Heidenthum und Offenbarung' of Dr. Fischer.

As for the progress of the past twenty years, while there has been a distinct development of critical research among English students—as seen in the work of Dr. Hatch in one department, and in that of Mr. Rendel Harris in another—the balance has not been greatly altered. The

decisive work is nearly all done abroad. Canon Driver's 'Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament' is an unoriginal synthesis of Continental work, which yet obviously leaves to others the drawing of straightforward conclusions. Distinctly more original is the late Professor Robertson Smith's 'Religion of the Semites', the outcome of the stimuli received by the author from the school of Kuenen and Wellhausen; yet even here, the original archaeological insight is not more remarkable than the collapse of the student's intelligence before the final test of creed-surrender. It would seem as if in our academic atmosphere it were impossible for any man at any moment to get more than half-way towards the measure of truth that can be reached by his foreign contemporaries. Colenso had his eyes opened only when he went among the Zulus. Arnold, like all the other English "tendency-writers" of his time, kept his mind comparatively open in virtue of living aloof from the university, though he was always capricious.

It is this inveterate rearwardness of our scholarship that sustains so many ill-informed religious people among us, journalists and others, in the notion that orthodoxy has triumphed over scepticism at the hands of such polemicists as Bishop Lightfoot. Our reading public is simply out of the way of knowing how capable contemporary

thought is really moving. It buys the historico-rhetorical works of Archdeacon Farrar, concerning which Professor Samuel Davidson (D.D. of Halle), pronounces that they "do little to advance the knowledge or criticism of the New Testament, but are rather retrograde, by wrapping traditional views in rhetorical verbiage,"* and the flimsy volumes of Mr. Haweis, which are to Renan what Dr. Farrar is to Baur. Of foreign specialists, it reads, in translation, Renan and Pressensé, or even Harnack, but not Havet; and the translations of the German masters are in the hands only of students, who keep the purport mostly to themselves. Such a public cannot really know anything of the merits of the conflict between Bishop Lightfoot and the author of 'Supernatural Religion', concerning which the theological Professor Pfeiderer has pronounced that Dr. Lightfoot's polemic is "extraordinarily weak", and that for such a refutation as he attempted "it really needed other means than Bishop Lightfoot had at his command"; † while Dr. Samuel Davidson decides that "the assaults which were made upon minor details leave its main positions unharmed".‡

* 'Introduction to the Study of the New Testament,' pref. to 2nd ed.

† 'The Development of Theology since Kant,' Eng. trans., 1890, p. 397.

‡ As above cited.

If we turn to a study in which England was for a time pre-eminent, and which she has abundant reason to cultivate continuously—that of political economy—we find, if not the same backwardness, at least a relatively decreasing activity. With such economists as Professor Marshall, Professor Sidgwick, Mr. Keynes, the late Professors Cliffe-Leslie, Cairnes, Jevons, and Rogers, Professor Nicholson (Edinburgh), and Professor Bastable (Dublin), it certainly cannot be said that since the general establishment of economic chairs the universities have ever ceased to be well represented in that study, effectively established as it originally was by the outsiders, Smith, Malthus, Ricardo, McCulloch, and the Mills. But, even here we are faced by the usual trouble: the universities do not promote fresh economic thought; the new analysis, which is the life of this as of all science, is mostly done outside; and on this side, accordingly, the European status of the English universities is lower than that of those of the United States, where economic studies are carried on with perhaps more of originality and energy than any other. The 'Annals of the American Academy of Political Science' testify to an activity in the American Schools that is nowhere equalled in this country; and even the attempt to organise economic study through the British Economic Association

seems so imperfect, with our customary academic inertia, that it may be pronounced almost a failure. Its organ, *The Economic Journal*, does little for progressive economic thinking, and exhibits much less freshness and vitality than the *American Quarterly Journal of Economics*.

This greater vigor of study in the States, connected as it is with the economic schools in the universities, new and old, can hardly be explained save through their development. A similar energy is seen in other studies, though in only a few are the results similarly satisfactory. Indeed, some of the phases of the modern university movement in the States are more likely to rouse misgivings than to sustain enthusiasm. Turning to a volume of 'Harvard Studies in Classical Philology', edited by a committee of the Classical Instructors of Harvard University (vol. ii, 1891), one finds a distinctly sandy collection of exertions in minutiae—elaborate papers on 'Some Constructions in Andocides', 'Gajus or Gaius?', the force of 'Nedum', 'Some uses of Nec,' 'Participial construction with *τυγχάνειν* and *κυρεῖν*,' and so on. It all points certainly to exact as against dilettantist study; but it gives no proof whatever of any free play of competent intellect on the matter of the classical literatures or the life of antiquity. In economics, happily, there is too much pressure

from living problems to admit of such excessive pursuit of technicalities; and in this field the American schools are at once so studious and so practical as to set us examining the causes of the comparative inactivity of our own. Some studies have clearly a special interest for particular countries. Thus, a special promotion of astronomy or meteorology in the States may be regarded as a natural result of the special wealth of meteorological phenomena in their area. But economics comes as directly home to the business and bosoms of men in England as anywhere, and if the academic organisation of study is ever to yield good results among us, it ought to be here. And some good results there certainly have been. Professor Rogers' six volumes on the 'History of Prices', the 'Introduction to English Economic History and Theory' of Mr. W. J. Ashley, and Dr. Cunningham's history of the 'Growth of English Industry and Commerce', are unquestionably laborious and valuable researches. Yet even these works, it will be observed, have little bearing on living economic problems as compared with, for instance, those of Jevons on 'The Coal Question', and of Cairnes on 'The Slave Power'; while Rogers' other works on the 'Economic Interpretation of History' and the 'Industrial and Commercial History of England' are ill-digested and diffuse

courses of lectures, of little permanent value. For a thorough monograph on 'English Associations of Working Men' we turn to Dr. Baernreither, an Austrian publicist. The comprehensive study of Dr. von Schulze-Gävernitz on British production in 'Der Grossbetrieb' (1892), has preceded similar studies among us, as that of Faber on 'Die Entstehung des Agrarschutzes in England' (1888), preceded the valuable 'History of the English Landed Interest' by Mr. Russell Montague Garnier (1892-3); and the works of Mr. Del Mar on the History of the Precious Metals and Money Systems render a service which no English specialist of late years has attempted. In short, while we get from Professors Marshall and Sidgwick good synthetic treatises of a more or less "orthodox" character, and from Dr. Keynes an able essay on the 'Scope and Method of Political Economy', we must look outside the universities for most of the new critical work. We find it supplied by the works of Mr. J. A. Hobson (a University Extension Lecturer, but without university function or preferment); Mr. H. D. Macleod, whose provocative powers proceed on a basis of wide knowledge; the late Mr. R. S. Moffat; Mr. Giffen; the competing Socialists and Individualists; and the professors at the minor English and other British universities; but not from Oxford and Cambridge. Such an able

critical research as the 'History of the Theories of Production and Distribution in English Political Economy from 1776 to 1848', by Mr. Edwin Cannan, of Balliol College (1893), stands out as an almost solitary product in its kind of original academic study; and it does not appear that it has any functional connection with university work. It avows, besides, that its author had been able to obtain "surprisingly little assistance from previous writers" in English, and that he owes most to Böhm-Bawerk and Adolf Held. And in the case of a pressing concrete problem, on which the university specialists might be looked to for light, that of Bi-metallism, we find on their part an astonishing and almost universal capitulation to the fallacy of the empirics, Professor Foxwell, of London, leading the way, and the majority of the younger professors following him, with no chairholder to say them nay. The defence has been conducted almost solely outside the universities, the writers of the Gold Standard Defence Association numbering hardly one academic name.

It seems unnecessary, after this, to prove the point in detail as regards other studies. It will hardly be disputed that, broadly speaking, the most important English work in history, philosophy, and science, for over a hundred years, has been done outside the universities, and much of it

even by non-university men. Gibbon, Lingard, Grote, Mill, Hallam, Macaulay, Finlay, Merivale, and Cox are not outweighed by Professors Stubbs, Abbott, Gardiner, and Pelham, though Dr. Bury holds his own with any; and when we reflect that Dr. Stubbs during his productive period held a canonry, and Dr. Creighton a bishopric, we are led to suspect that almost any outside function involving literary leisure is more likely than a professorship to subserve literary activity. So in philosophy, though the disproportion is not so great, there is much the same academic failure to lead. The vigorous stimuli in England have come from outside, from the Mills and Spencer rather than from Whewell and Mansel. Sir William Hamilton, as a producer, is to be credited to Scotland, with Professors Bain and Caird; and while we have industrious work from Scotch teachers, as Professors Fraser and Flint, and such younger men as Professor Seth, and further excellent work from chairholders at the minor universities, as Professors Sorley and Adamson, the great universities do no proportional service. Apart from the original and able performances of Mr. F. H. Bradley, the expository work of Professor Wallace and the impermanent system-making of Professor Green are almost the only notable recent services to philosophy by the great schools, though on

the side of philosophy they are extremely well endowed.

Over the question of the university system and physical science we need spend no time. Much leeway has certainly been made up in the past twenty years, and some important scientific advances are already associated with the work of professorial chairs; but it will take many more years of such work to secure to our universities the credit of leading and purifying scientific thought. And when we consider the course of things in the other departments of knowledge above considered, it is impossible to feel confident that, in regard to the physical sciences, the universities will be steadily progressive and never reactionary and unproductive.

II.

At this point, if not before, it will doubtless be objected that if history and philosophy and social and physical science are thus found to be more progressive and energetic outside the universities, in the hands of men not specially appointed and endowed to study them, than in the appointed and endowed places made for them, not only need we be under no misgivings as to the future of research among us, but we have ground for distrusting the method of special provision and endowment. If natural science (it will be

said) is seen to have been more successfully pursued by the Faradays and Joules and Wheatstones and Darwins and Wallaces than by the holders of university chairs; if more has been done for *e.g.*, Shakspeare study and Chaucer study by the Chaucer and Shakspeare Societies than by our professors of literature; if Gibbon and Grote and Finlay have given us greater histories of Rome and Greece than any produced by the long series of professors specially appointed to deal with the lore of Rome and Greece; if our most comprehensive living thinker is a man who never attended a university or even studied a dead language; and if outsiders to-day are to be looked to for the re-writing of economics, as before for the beginnings of the science, why should we not simply draw the conclusion that, in our society at least, the higher studies are best left to free and unprotected cultivation?

This takes us back to the *laissez-faire* argument of Adam Smith, who decided that "the endowments of schools and colleges have necessarily diminished, more or less, the necessity of application in the teachers".* The outcome of that argument is that professors should be left to depend upon the fees of students. Yet all the

* 'Wealth of Nations,' B. v, ch. 1, part iii, Art. 2. Cp. Smith's letter to Cullen, given in Note XX of McCulloch's edition.

while the fee-paying students must be held, on Smith's own view, to come forward only because they must acquire a certain knowledge in order to obtain certain diplomas, entitling them to practise certain professions. Smith himself was opposed to degrees in general; but on his own theory of self-interest, nobody would take any trouble to acquire a thorough medical education if he could practise and draw fees without it, in which case there would be no thorough teaching whatever, by professors or anyone else. Thus even the *laissez-faire* doctrine takes for granted a previous repudiation of *laissez-faire*,† and all the while Smith confesses that, though the subjects taught in universities are not very well taught, "had it not been for those institutions, they would not have been commonly taught at all, and both the individual and the public would have suffered a good deal from the want of those important parts of education".‡ In fact, if Smith's primary principle were consistently applied, it would veto the very establishment of universities.

† McCulloch (Note XX to Smith) decides at once for compulsory degrees, though in other matters a thorough-going champion of *laissez-faire*.

‡ 'Wealth of Nations,' as cited. It is difficult to believe that this paragraph, which is absolutely incoherent with its context, was written by Smith. It reads like another man's note incorporated by the author. But division against himself is certainly not unusual in Smith.

As that position is not taken up by anybody, we may profitably curtail the argument by coming straight to the historical evidence, which at once shows that Smith's thesis about endowments is false. The German universities are established and have been reorganised on "protective" principles; they are endowed; the professors do not live by their fees, and they are the most efficient and productive in Europe. Smith's narrow conception of a professor's "interest" (which he proceeds to qualify with the phrase "at least, as interest is vulgarly understood," without offering any other view), excludes the all-important motives of literary ambition and the desire for influence. These alone, under favorable conditions, do more than he seems to have held possible, even under the one motive he believed to be efficient. Smith's own book is, indeed, the refutation of his own thesis; and what he did in his retirement, out of concern for truth, professors are found ready to do without retiring, on similar motives. Nor is this, as some would still have us think, a matter of any special national gift. Among Smith's own academic contemporaries in Scotland, there was not a little active and educative research, apparently because the period was one of comparative impotence or indifference on the theological side. Robertson, Adam Ferguson, Millar, and Dunbar, the socio-

logists, were all university professors, as were Cullen and Black, the physicists. Nor has spontaneous research ever since been unknown in the Scotch universities, in the departments in which free research does not trench on the reigning creed. The scientific open-mindedness and activity of the German universities, on the other hand, is clearly a modern development, due to their modern constitution and environment. In the periods when they, like others, were substantially clerical corporations, they resisted new ideas and new methods as determinedly as the English have ever done; and the revival of learning at the end of the fifteenth century was mainly brought about by the educative influence of the single seminary of St. Agnes in Westphalia.* Sunk very low by the Thirty Years' War, the German universities have in the last and the present century been brought to their high efficiency by being placed on a footing where in general no church has the power, directly or indirectly, to affect their life. And there really seems to be only one reason, apart from the persistence of the clerical tradition, why the English universities should not be similarly developed. The Church of England seems to be excelled only by the Church of Rome (as seen at work in

* Hamilton, 'Discussions,' pp. 205-214.

Spain) in the faculty of paralysing or tabooing the higher knowledge; and it seems unlikely that Oxford and Cambridge will ever be properly developed while the present church influence lasts.

Before, however, we consider the remedy for the ecclesiastical evil, note must be taken of the other element just hinted at. It consists in the peculiar social constitution of the two leading universities, that is, the very large preponderance of an aristocratic and idle-class element among the students. This corresponds with the special prevalence of the same element in English society in general. The remark so often made as to the uniqueness in Europe of the type of "English gentleman" points simply to the fact that since the French Revolution the idle wealthy class is much larger in England than anywhere else. It is needless here to go at any length into the causes, which are, briefly put: (1) that the landed class in England has never been curtailed, as it was in France at the Revolution, and in Prussia afterwards; and (2) that the rapid industrial development of modern England built up a new idle class in advance of any similar evolution elsewhere. This two-fold idle class sends its sons, as a matter of course, to Oxford and Cambridge, where, accordingly, whatever attempts may be made to reform the system of studies, it

seems impossible to substitute a practical and studious atmosphere for that of aristocratic luxury and sport. Pattison fully recognised this influence in his work on university reorganisation; but he seems to have supposed that it could be counteracted by a reconstitution or enlargement of the universities on better academic lines. It is difficult to share his confidence. All the characteristics specified by him still subsist; despite a larger infusion of middle-class men bent on turning their studies to practical account, the wealthy class still gives tone to a large part of the life of both universities; the reformed machinery of fellowships yields no tolerable fruits in the way of independent and original work; and it seems almost inconceivable that in a world thus affected by the two forces of aristocracy and clericalism, there can be developed any such studious activity and originality as are seen in the universities of Germany, where the great mass of the men come from frugal middle-class and professional families, and thousands are zealously bent on distinguishing themselves by original work. There is some admirable intellectual material in our aristocratic class, and we have seen that there are some genuine scholarly elements in the clerical class; but the system built up by their conjunction seems to defy all the forces of permutation yet brought to bear.

Are we, then, after all driven back to the Smithian position? Is it really better to give up the hope of making our universities ideally efficient? That would be a sombre conclusion to come to; the more so because those phenomena which have encouraged the *laissez-faire* view can easily be seen to be transient and illusive. The stress of modern socialistic discussion must by this time have brought many people to the point of seeing that it has been by a mere series of socio-economic "flukes" that so much studious work has been done in the past outside of our universities by men who chanced to have private means. That Gibbon and Darwin inherited a sufficient income; that Grote and Sir John Lubbock, as well-to-do bankers, could give much leisure to research; that Mr. Spencer in various ways has been enabled to produce his *Synthetic Philosophy*; and that John Stuart Mill had a well-paid official post with very little to do—these are among a series of accidents, for the repetition of which there can be no security whatever; nay, the repetition of which grows less and less likely as our commercial development proceeds. There has been "no Gibbon but Gibbon", no Grote but Grote; and, though Romanes followed on Darwin, the whole tendency of our social atmosphere is increasingly unfavorable to the appearance of such men. The very fact of

the abundance of specialist competition abroad is now a discouragement to great scholarly and scientific undertakings by private men. We are practically agreed all round that the systematic technical education of other countries, once our inferiors in manufacturing skill, forces upon us a similar systematic technical education if we are industrially to survive. On the same or analogous principles, we must make a systematic provision for the higher intellectual life if we are not on that side more and more to fall behind. And though there will be some among us who will face the latter risk with little concern, as compared with what they feel over the other, it is assumed in the present inquiry that most readers will admit the need for making due provision in the one case as in the other.

What, then, is to be done? Space permits at present only a general answer, which may at another time be extended in detail, namely, that the only way to put English university life and work on a sound footing is to set up universities apart from Oxford and Cambridge to do the things that they have failed to do. These universities may be one day forced into efficiency by the pressure of rival institutions, but in no other way are they likely to be. Of such rival institutions the germs already exist in the minor universities of England and Wales; but to develop

even these aright, as against the reactionary forces of Oxford and Cambridge, there is needed not only their much better endowment, but the establishment of a specially powerful force of rivalry and initiative outside of them all. And this needed force is the so long talked-of TEACHING UNIVERSITY FOR LONDON, on the broadest and noblest scale on which it can be practically conceived; the scale, that is, of a university as numerous as that of Paris, and as powerfully taught as that of Berlin, as systematically endowed as the best recent foundations in the United States, and as free as the freest German universities were before the imperial period. As the re-organised university of Berlin gave an intellectual lead to the whole of modern Germany after 1815, so an adequate university for London may give an effective intellectual lead to the England of the coming century, with its deepening and thickening and darkening problems of science and action. And if our Liberal party could but rise to a far-seeing view, not merely of its tasks but of its own interests as an organisation, it would make the provision of such a university for London one of its dearest aims. Oxford and Cambridge are, in the main, forces and sources of political reaction; and as they have been in the past, so they seem certain to be in the future. If then our Liberalism, left in the

lurch as it has of late been by some of the social forces which formerly sustained it against the Conservatism of the old universities, is in future to triumph over the intellectual reaction at present in force, it must be in virtue of an intellectual element as much more powerful as it is more progressive. And how can such an element be better generated than by creating a new and living university on the largest scale, on such foundations as all modern experience testifies to be the best?

GEORGE ELIOT ON NATIONAL SENTIMENT.

(1883.)

THE reconsideration of morals, now confusedly going on among the democracy of the thinking world, necessarily involves some discussion on national or international ethics. Practical British politicians, in their own way, have thrown out many crudities with an air of finality, having lately been much excited thereto; talking congresses have discussed theories about the bases of international relations; and some laborious writers, such as Professor Seeley, have claimed to inculcate scientific methods of thinking on the subject. The unformed public mind, withdrawing from a perplexed attention to the vehemently vague gospel of Carlyle and Ruskin, is adapting itself to an evolutionary standpoint with a dim premonition of great developments. In this state of affairs, just before the appearance of Herbert Spencer's 'Data of Ethics,' comes George Eliot with a nervous and forceful essay entitled 'The Modern Hep! Hep! Hep!' endorsing a grotesque etymology,* and giving a

* "Hep, Hep, Hurrah!" is absurdly alleged to be derived from a war-cry contrived by the stormers of a German town, in which many Jews had taken refuge,

sharp stimulus to reflection on the great question of the value of national sentiment.

In addition to the many judgments, reasonable and unreasonable, which have been pronounced on the essays entitled 'The Impressions of Theophrastus Such', the suggestion might be hazarded that, with the exception of the two prefatory papers, they represent intermediate or reactionary moods. The book does not produce the impression of an artistic whole, the verisimilar record of the important impressions of such a deep student of human nature as is presented in the portrait of the imaginary writer. The introductory essays 'Looking Inward' and 'Looking Backward' recommend themselves, in their characteristic and deliberate art, as mere systematic attempts of after-thought to give an authoritative unity to utterances not framed from any given point of view. Thus one suspects that the unsympathetic tone so much complained of in the analyses of various characters is the outcome of moods in which George Eliot stepped out of her distinctive state of yearning objectivity, relishing an indulgence in a more primitive attitude. Sometimes the suspicion is inverted, but the reader has generally a feeling that after the super-subtle portraiture of 'Looking In-

from the initial letters of the phrase, "Hierosolyma est perdita".

ward,' a number of the "impressions" (the name is prudently chosen) are rather elaborately superficial, with all their epigrammatic brilliance of phrasing. Whatever be the general justice of this estimate, certain it is that no one can find in 'The Modern Hep! Hep! Hep!' any conformity with the suggested personality of Theophrastus Such. Here is just George Eliot in an access of overmastering feeling; one might say in an intellectual passion. She joins issue in person with all who condemned the "Hebrew portions" of her last great book. It might almost be suspected that the great author had descended from her serene pedestal of self-criticism and read what the world of irresponsible reviewers said of 'Daniel Deronda'. From the most ambitious critics down to the most provincial of prejudice-mongers, all classes of objectors—here described as framers of "forms of bad reasoning"—are dealt with.

As a piece of dialectics the essay is peculiarly interesting. The author premises that the preciousness of national memories is a "glorious commonplace" affirmed by most persons who have "feeling and understanding enough to be conscious of the connection between the patriotic and every other affection which lifts us above emigrating rats and free-loving baboons". The "living force of sentiment in common which

makes a national consciousness", is declared to be supremely necessary to healthful and harmonious life, not only national but individual. Therefore Britons and men of every nation, while cherishing their own national sentiments, should recognise the profound fitness of an equal attachment to nationality in every other people, understanding that its absence is a privation of the greatest good. It is not merely contended that a national sentiment is valuable as manifested in Italy and Greece. The ripest nations in the world must have it. But the proposition is pointed specially to the case of the Jews. These have a glorious national memory, which has been intensified and added to by their passionate clinging to the Hebrew principle of separateness through so many centuries of oppression and trial. Allowing for numerical proportion, they rival the natives of all European countries in healthiness and beauty of physique, in practical ability, in scientific and artistic aptitude, and in "some forms of ethical value". On all grounds, then, the restoration of Jewish nationality is eminently desirable, and the essayist hopes that some new Ezras or Maccabees will remake the Jewish nation.

Setting out with the ostensible purpose of fighting the cause of the Jews against "dull" people who find fault with the idiosyncracies of

that race, it will be seen that she affirms those idiosyncracies to be the manifestation of a spirit than which nothing nobler can animate the censors themselves, arguing with all the force and feeling of her well-wrought style that the ardent indulgence of what may be broadly described as the "national sentiment" is necessary to the realisation of the highest type of humanity. If eloquent diction could carry the point, it were here done easily enough. But a passionless examination discloses that fine language here, as so often elsewhere, covers thought not of the solidest, and is used to give a deceptive bias to arguments which, rigorously stated, tend otherwise. Take the following passage:—

"The eminence, the nobleness of a people depends on its capability of being stirred by memories, and of striving for what we call spiritual ends—ends which consist, not in immediate material possession, but in the satisfaction of a great feeling that animates the collective body as with one soul. A people having the seed of worthiness in it must feel an answering thrill when it is adjured by the deaths of its heroes who died to preserve its national existence; when it is reminded of its small beginnings and gradual growth through past labors and struggles, such as are still demanded of it in order that the freedom and well-being thus inherited may be transmitted unimpaired to children and children's children; when an appeal against the permission of injustice is made to great precedents in its history and to the better genius breathing in its institutions. . . . Nations so moved will resist conquest with the very breasts of their women; will pay their millions and their blood to abolish slavery; will share

privation in famine and all calamity; will produce poets to 'sing some great story of a man', and thinkers whose theories will bear the test of action."

And this:—

"The fiery resolve to resist invasion, though with an improvised array of pitchforks, is felt to be virtuous, and to be worthy of a historic people. Why? Because there is a national life in our veins. Because there is something specifically English which we feel to be supremely worth striving for, worth dying for, rather than living to renounce it."

Is not all this just a trifle *banal*? Should we ever have heard it from George Eliot had she not become possessed by an enthusiasm for the restoration of the Jews?

Many examples might be given of the one-sidedness of the reasoning. The author quotes approvingly the teachings of Mr. Freeman, who insists on a recognition of the virtues of our Scandinavian forefathers; on an "affectionate reverence" for their fierce fragments of battle song; on an acknowledgment of our common relationship to those "old English seamen". We profit by their rough work, and ought to cherish our sense of a common descent as a bond of obligation. But when the essayist proceeds to consider the conduct of our ancestors towards the Jews, another measure is meted. We now read of "the rabble of crusaders who robbed and murdered in [Christ's] name", and hear of the medieval persecutors of the Jews as "men whom

cross, creed, and baptism had left cruel, rapacious, and debauched". The conquest of England by the "old English seamen", and the conquest of Canaan by the children of Israel, are to be taken as inspiring memories for Englishmen and Jews respectively; but the abortive Crusades, which it is not now fashionable to glory in, are to be a hissing and a byword. Why? Does anyone believe that there was less of cruelty and rapacity among the conquering Hebrews and Angles than among the Crusaders? Were the motives of the invading rabbles more worthy than those of the rabble of the cross? If there is any question of nobleness involved, the palm should, on the author's own plane of sentiment, be awarded to the Crusaders, who fought for an idea rather than for mere material possession. Had they no virtues, no heroisms? The truth is that the rapacities and the cruelties smell too strong, by mere fact of nearness, to allow of serene sentimentalising. It is felt that an awkward moral question is involved. But is not the same question involved in the more remote actions of the old English seamen and the children of Israel, whose memories we and the Jews are to cherish so affectionately? There is no reasonable drawing of the line possible. Medieval persecutions of the Jews were the outcome of the same healthy instincts of selfishness

and "spirit of separateness" as prompted the overrunning of Britannia and of Canaan; it is equally idle to berate the Crusaders and to belaud the Jutes and the Jews.

A writer must take the consequences of his theories. Our author lauds

"that spirit of separateness which has not yet done its work in the education of mankind, which has created the varying genius of nations, and, like the Muses, is the offspring of memory."

Whereupon the question arises whether there could be a better definition of the spirit animating the Christian persecutors of Jews than this of "separateness". The origin of the *ethnos*, Schelling and Hegel tell us, was a religion. Christianity had a fusing effect — *vide* the Crusades. What more inevitable than that Christians should possess a spirit of separateness as Christians; and why then condemn the fruits of that spirit in this case? Was not the Christian persecution of Jews part of the education of Christendom? Could the spirit of separateness act and not act at the same time? The fact is, our author is preaching a contradiction.

The spirit of separateness, we are told, is not yet played out. Again,

"The tendency of things is towards the quicker or slower fusion of races. It is impossible to arrest this tendency: all we can do is to moderate its course so as to hinder it from degrading the moral status of societies by a too rapid effacement of those national

traditions and customs which are the language of the national genius—the deep suckers of healthy sentiment. Such moderating and guidance of inevitable movement is worthy of all effort. And it is in this sense that the modern insistence on the idea of Nationalities has value.”

“A common humanity is not yet enough to feed the rich blood of various activity which makes a complete man. The time is not yet come for cosmopolitanism to be highly virtuous, any more than for communism to suffice for social energy.”

To what does this amount? If we wish to be good or noble we are to cultivate, if we have to any extent neglected, the sentiment of insularity. Further, we must take a cosmopolitan delight in seeing that men of other nations indulge in national pride likewise. The very amelioration of conduct which the essay as a whole inculcates is to be a development of that cosmopolitanism which cannot yet be “highly virtuous”! Let us analyse this singularly self-annihilating doctrine.

“I, an Englishman, must purposely feel myself to be better than you, a Frenchman, and glory in my special pedigree and national memories; while recognising that you, the Frenchman, ought to feel that you are better than I, and be superlatively proud of *your* pedigree and national memories. We must understand that such views, absolute and reciprocal, are necessary to our harmonious and healthy life. We cannot be noble otherwise.”

Our author has a phrase about “roasting-jack

logic", which suggests that she would refuse to see anything in such an analysis, and would be likely to meet it with the familiar defence that mere logic applied to problems of action misses the real issue. But this defence proceeds on a misconception of the nature of logic. A sound proposition concerning conduct can *not* be ridden down to an absurdity without an *illogical* tampering with considerations of expediency which are part of the argument. The foregoing reduction is a simple translation into plain terms of a proposition couched in elevated language, imposing, but vague. What is the inevitable comment? - That men cannot seriously proceed to cultivate an instinct as a lad cultivates his whiskers. While the instinct was paramount its operation was absolute; but the very process of recognising it as a factor in all national growth amounts to taking it up by the roots for scientific examination. It cannot be grown again in the soil whence it has been uprooted.

This supposition that men can at once be absolutely above and devoutly subject to a given instinct is a logical pitfall into which our author often falls. It crops up thus in another form in another essay* in the same work: "It is undeniable that a too intense consciousness of one's

* 'How we come to give ourselves false testimonials,' p. 228.

kinship with all frailties and vices undermines the actual heroism which battles against all wrong." To which the answer is that it is idle to tell a man to unlive his life. There is no fear of the world going too fast, or of the race going past its conditions and falling over the edge. The teachings, "you must not grow too introspective or too philosophic over the nature of evil, else you will grow disinclined to punish criminals"; and "you must not grow too cosmopolitan in the present state of the world or you will become ignoble", philosophically viewed, are on a par with the advice to a child not to grow too fast.

Lack of faith in the salubrity of the evolution process, of course, is as incurable as any other form of reactionism, but it is the least excusable. In so far as it is attempted to be justified by our author, her reasoning is inconclusive. The suggestion about the degradation of the moral status of societies is supported by no recital of ascertained facts in current history; and the argument that national sentiment is at the bottom of popular resentment of any exhibition of injustice may fairly be called weak. We desire the amelioration of the lot of the Hindoos, the redressing of the inequalities of Parliamentary representation, the deterrence of Highland or Irish landlords from a policy of depopulation, the abolition

of the laws of entail or primogeniture, the allowance of fair remuneration for unexhausted improvements, on other grounds than that our ancestors secured the Magna Charta, gained the battle of Bannockburn, or rose against English misrule in Ireland. Some men will always hunger for improvement as surely as for food. The democratic instinct is observed to be very strong even in British working men whose knowledge of British history is not up to the requirements of the fourth standard.

So far from being invariably inspired to great deeds by the memory of our ancestors, we frequently charge our ancestors with injustice and cruel bigotry. On the other hand, the disposition to live in national memories is capable of producing the most evil results. Have we not before our eyes the spectacle of the British people declaiming their resolution to keep against all comers that Indian Empire which their fathers gained for them, when all the while they will hardly lighten the burdens of their rule over the Hindoo with the tips of their fingers? When Macaulay wrote his sketch of the life of Clive he thought fit to complain that Englishmen displayed a strange apathy to the great deeds of the men who won the Empire. Perhaps the simple truth was that the acquisition was still too recent for the great national theft

to pass for a national glory. Nowadays no one can complain of a lack of patriotic enthusiasm over the possession of India as a glorious fact in our history and a significant element in our prestige; but it is our national shame that our practical relations with India are marked by a stupendous selfishness. The patriotic House of Commons, of which but a thin percentage ever sits out an Indian Budget night, finds such a policy very good. Is this placid turpitude an inevitable concomitant of the "nobleness" which can be fed only by an exuberant sense of national greatness? Which is the nobler or more harmonious-minded man—he who shouts "we'll never give up India!" while he feeds fat on the wealth drained from her; or the cool thinker, rated as unpatriotic by the other, who contemplates with tranquillity the ultimate surrender of India to native management, and the writing of "Finis" to the story of British Oriental Empire as a tale that is told? Dr. Johnson is recorded to have declared that "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel". Of late it has been quite intelligible how a politician could once say, "I never have been and never will be a patriot"; and if scoundrelism is not the word to associate with the patriotism of which so much has been heard, it is at least certain that it co-existed in many minds with an inferior moral sense.

It is indeed quite true that even the most philosophic minds retain, after recognition of the primitive nature of the national sentiment, the capacity of being incited by it in circumstances more or less coercive. The most cosmopolitan of healthy Europeans is in no danger of feeling indifferent to the success of his countrymen in repelling invasion. The most metaphysical Scot is probably capable of a passing thrill of abstract nationalism—a quickening of the pulse over “Scots wha hae”. There has not been any pernicious falling off in German patriotism of late years, though some in the day of Napoleonic supremacy defined the love of country as at best a heroic weakness, which they were glad to be without. We do not even find in English society any widespread traces of that tranquil cynicism which makes a man in a recent story, judging his ancestors by their portraits, describe them as “a raffish lot”. Patriotism is as common as selfishness. Our essayist, indeed, does not affirm any lack of it. She expressly admits that “the affectation of undervaluing everything native, and being too fine for one’s own country, belongs only to a few minds of no dangerous leverage”. That being so, why does she preach so vehemently the danger of losing and the necessity of cultivating national sentiment? Simply because, being desirous to see a new Jewry, she

is obliged to praise a spirit of all-absorbing nationalism in Jews, and consequently in other peoples.

A hasty reader may assume that the foregoing is designed as a vindication of that vulgar condemning of the Jews which has excited George Eliot's generous indignation. Such an interpretation would be far astray. Various classes of anti-Hebraists are dealt with by our author, but she nowhere takes into account the views of unprejudiced evolutionists. The references to the inefficacy of cosmopolitanism as an inspiring sentiment at this stage of human development are doubtless made for the benefit of evolutionists; but this is obviously done on the supposition that the persons needing such teaching decry Jewish pride of race as an "evil pride" (whether or not they are individually sneaks), or condemn Jews generally as "obstinate adherents to an out-worn creed". It is suggested that certain anti-Judaic advocates—generally Liberals, or rather Whigs—have departed from their former attitude, and are now possessed by a sense of mistake, regarding the Roumanians as having shown an enviable wisdom in giving the Jews as little chance as possible. All this, in simple truth, is rather unworthy of George Eliot. It may safely be said that the combination of views

thus sketched is found in no dozen of men. It was hardly worth her while to gird at the poor little bigots or "polite persons" whose anti-Judaic feeling is summed up in the sentence, "I never *did* like the Jews"; or to write feelingly for a "polite society" which she believes to dislike Jews in a general way without any knowledge of their characteristics, or simply on the strength of the objectionableness of Lord Beaconsfield, or of "having known a Mr. Jacobson who was very unpleasant". Fine-textured teaching about national sentiment is thrown away on such minds. Again, the men who "indicate their contemptuous surprise that anyone should entertain the destiny of the Jews as a worthy subject" simply by "referring to Moloch and their own agreement with the theory that the religion of Jehovah was merely a transformed Moloch-worship"—whether or not they consider themselves in the very van of modern advancement—are *not* the class whose objections George Eliot had most need to refute. The intelligent evolutionist will not single out Jewish exclusiveness as an evil pride. Neither will he condemn Jews as "obstinate adherents to an outworn creed". The truth is, he does not always find them so, by any means. Those Jews who do adhere to Judaism receive from him no censure which he does not give to believers in any other religious

system—that is, only a censure of the intellect. He is only too much inclined to take a scientific satisfaction in studying the exclusiveness they still manifest as something unique in racial development, a phenomenon by no means certain to remain vivid beyond a century or so. He sees that the exclusiveness cannot long subsist after the theology is gone. He has no animus against the Jews, but is glad to profit by whatever gifts they bring to the common store. In truth, he is disposed to wonder a little that George Eliot should lay such stress on anti-Judaic prejudice—a manifestation precisely on a level with the entertaining provincial objection to “foreigners” generally, at which she herself has smiled.

Can it be that this unusual heat is due to our author's dissatisfaction at the want of countenance shown to a flighty scheme of hers? Some people who cannot help having their canons of fictional criticism colored a little by their working sense of the fitness of things, think that ‘Daniel Deronda’ was removed from the class of the author's most effective works by the expedient of despatching the hero at the close on a mission to Palestine for the re-establishment of the Jewish polity. That feeling is likely to take a more positive shape when the author is found suggesting such a re-establishment as profoundly desirable on grounds of enlightened

historical science. As little as thinking men contemplate a repeal of our emancipatory laws, do they conceive the establishment of a revived Jewish theocracy. A modern Jewish community in the East, influencing Eastern civilisation for good, would be one thing; a *Judaic* State would be another. Our author deliberately proposes that the great mass of educated unorthodox Jews should go back to their abandoned theology with the view of getting the full virtue of their national memories. Such an interpretation may seem extravagant, but the reasoning is void if that be not meant.

"There is a sense in which the worthy child of a nation that has brought forth illustrious prophets, high and unique among the poets of the world, is bound by their visions."

Here the essence of the essayist's opinions luminously presents itself. "Individual nobleness," so in effect runs the argument, "is impossible without a clinging to national memories and a national existence. The Jews, therefore, ought again to have a national existence." But the soul of their ancient national existence, after the exile, was their theology; and while the multitude is orthodox a passionate grasp of that theology is necessary to a revived nationality. But, again, the theology in question is worn out, and the culture of modern Jews is to be measured by the completeness of their abandonment

of it. Then, having thereby lost their hold of the glorious memories of their race, they are in so far hopelessly degraded, and no one of them can be harmoniously great. This is the upshot of the essay, and is the proposition true? Is the type of Jewish unworthiness to be Spinoza? Is the average Jew of commerce, living its typical life, ennobled by his mere traditionalism? Is the end of sympathetic internationalism to be a sentimental repudiation of the wisdom of thought and culture and a return to the ideals of semi-barbarism? And can it be conceived that George Eliot refuses to cast in her lot with the march of mankind?

The only answer possible is that that fine intellect has, in a glow of generous wrath at a vulgar bigotry, deviated into a line of thought which is a departure from the straight and narrow path of the modern ideal thinker who "views the thing as it really is". It is matter for regret that our great novelist should thus raise the cry of Jewish restoration. It is perhaps more to be regretted that the reasoning—or rather the rhetoric—urged in support of that cry is such as may easily do damage.

For what is likely to be the immediate practical effect of this glorification of the national sentiment by one of the leading writers of the time? It is to give ground for complacency to

all narrow-visioned, possessed "patriots" whose patriotism is for the most part mere hatred, or at best jealousy, of some other nation, and whose unreasoning tenacity tends to drag all popular thinking down to a primitive level. It is to encourage all insincere writers of bragging and canting "patriotism" in the daily Press to continue deluding the crowd. It is—in tendency at least—to put further back the time when our democracy shall be capable of viewing questions of international policy in the light of reason, banishing alike its jealous fear of other nationalities, its revoltingly foolish jubilation over its own prestige, and the hateful, colossal selfishness in action which is the result of such states of feeling. From the perusal of 'The Modern Hep! Hep! Hep!' the superficial reader will carry away the positive propositions concerning the value of a national consciousness (something very different in his conception from a national conscience), paying only transient and unintelligent heed to the inculcation of applausive respect for national sentiment abroad. As is above contended, the dual feeling is impossible.

And to tell men who have outgrown their rule-Britannia conceptions of life, or Jews who have outgrown Judaism, that they have lost the greatest good, and that henceforth there is possible for them no nobleness or harmony of life,

this is but to commit a partial repudiation of human progress. Supposing that the principle of separateness has not yet done its work in the world, is it to be said that those who first cast it off are the inferior types? This is not a good hearing from George Eliot; and the concluding words of the essay, hurling a charge of teaching a "blinding superstition" at all who refuse to subscribe to her ardent Judaism, come far short of her higher tone.

Withal, this essay on 'The Modern Hep! Hep! Hep!' cannot be dismissed by an otherwise respectful student of George Eliot's works as a mere forcible futility. When all is said, it powerfully recalls the saying that the errors of the wise are more instructive than the truths of fools. This very praise of national sentiment in foreign nations may indirectly do something to hasten the time when the vainglorious and uneasy spirit of national separateness shall die in a larger thought. And whatever be the purpose or trend of any one utterance of hers, those are many who can say that their progress towards the larger thought was stimulated in the past by their contact, in the writings of George Eliot, with a noble and strenuous mind.

NIETZSCHE'S SOCIOLOGY.

(1897.)

CRITICISM, in the rigorous sense of the term, can hardly be passed on Nietzsche by anyone sensitive to his gifts and sympathetic with his intellectual bent. Through all his work, even of the earlier years, there runs the irregular pulsation, the intermittence of meaning, the distraught abruptness, of a mind already unstrung; and the thought of the formless life which is all that is now left of him puts to silence the criticism that is stirred up by the writings themselves. It seems a kind of inhumanity to pass explicit censure on the work of those quivering hands.

But Dr. Tille, the editor of the English translation of Nietzsche's works, now being published, tells us that he has already "given rise to an independent school of thought on the Continent", and that he stands foremost among the independent thinkers who have come forward in modern Germany to set up in morals and sociology "one standard, the physiological," by which all problems are to be tried and all doctrines tested. I believe Dr. Tille does not seriously exaggerate Nietzsche's vogue. One hears of men of culture in Germany and Austria

who set him above all other modern writers, declaring that no one else is now worth reading; and it is to be presumed that their devotion constitutes them in a sense a "school", swearing as they do by Nietzsche's doctrines and applying them so far as may be. That this kind of *schwärmerei* can permanently modify modern philosophy I do not suppose; but when formally pressed upon us as a scientific system of thought, its gospel is certainly worth discussing. When set up as an oracle of modern rationalism, rectifying rationalist ethics for the effective discrediting of those of Christianity, Nietzsche becomes a source of possible confusion of thought, and his teaching has to be dealt with as such. That which we could not fitly say by way of attack upon Nietzsche we may fitly say by way of argument with his disciples.

And, first, as to his own physiology, taken in connection with his prevailing thesis. It would not avail, of course, to claim to discredit his theses in detail by pronouncing them products of neurosis; but what do Nietzsche's followers make of the two facts, (1) that his main weapon against the creeds and compositions he dislikes is to stigmatise them as products of *décadence*, and (2) that he himself was past all question a *décadent*, a degenerate, a physiologically morbid organism? This contradiction faces us

squarely at the outset. Nietzsche condemns Christianity, for instance, as born in decadence (I shall use the English terms in the sense of the French), as making for decadence, and as being the religious expression of decadence. But then Nietzsche's criticism is itself unquestionably a product and expression of decadence. Can the decadent, on the verge of his utter collapse, give us sound criticism? If so, it is no argument against Wagner, against Schopenhauer, against Christianity, to call them expressions of decadence. Nietzsche takes it for granted that Wagner's music, assuming it to result from or express decadence, must make for decadence in others. Then Nietzsche's criticism, coming from a degenerate, must make for degeneracy in others; and his followers are the very decadents of their own professed aversion. On these lines, the dispute is over already; and if we are to reach any useful result, it must be reshaped.

To begin with, we must come to some clear understanding about the bearing of the word decadence. In its special sense it stands, not for decaying states of health in general, but for neurotic decay in particular; the kind of decay which necessarily affects the subject's state of mind, because of directly modifying the special apparatus of perception and thought. Now, it may fairly be suggested that the thinking, writ-

ing, composition, or painting done by a person so affected is likely to have in it something uncongenial and repellent to people with a sound nervous system; and, in view of the relativity of all æsthetic criticism, such a specification of disease is perhaps as good a reason as any other that can be given for simple spontaneous aversion to certain work. Even in æsthetics, however, such a specification does not settle the critical case. The work of the neurotic may have great beauty, charm, interest, or impressiveness for people who are not neurotic. It is needless to recite instances; the names of Tasso, Heine, Rousseau, Leopardi, Poe, Schumann, Dostoievsky, Maupassant, and many others, will at once recall themselves as those of men proved to have undergone one or other form of neurosis, and so to have been "degenerates", decadents, in the special sense of the term. No one, surely, will maintain that all the work of all these men appeals only to neurotic persons, though probably some of the work of all of them repels many healthy people by what they term its morbidity. Can it then be said that the people to whom most or any of it appeals are apt to be made neurotic by it? That also is surely out of the question. There is really not enough neurosis about to give standing-room for any such suspicion. So that, even if neurotic

people are found invariably to prefer Schumann to Brahms, and Heine to Goethe, and Leopardi to Lessing, and Dostoievsky to George Eliot, it does not follow that they caught their trouble from their favorite writers and composers. At most they encourage the medical view that neurotics are mutually attractive.

When we turn to the thinkers, the teachers, the same caveat must be made. It is reasonable to say, as Nietzsche does, that Schopenhauer, whom we know to have been to some extent neurotic, and to have been panic-stricken on hearing of the approach of cholera, was "the philosopher of decadence". It is arguable that his very unfitness for life, the lack of nervous poise and sufficiency which expressed itself in blind panic at the approach of danger, was at the same time the source of his apparently contrary conviction that life is not worth living; and when his main thesis is thus looked at, it is partly disposed of for us as a mere statement of the personal equation. But, even thus, his teaching is not wholly disposed of. Many of his reasonings may be sound; many of his views may coincide with those of men not life-weary or decadent; and even the thesis that life is not worth living stands as a challenge to our philosophic thought until we have philosophically met it on its merits, without regard to

Schopenhauer's personal equation. Were it otherwise, we should have to reconsider a good many opinions outside of philosophy and ethics. Newton and Flamsteed were both in some degree neurotic, Newton having been for a time positively insane, while Flamsteed exhibited something little short of the insane quarrelsomeness of Rousseau. Does it then follow that the practical observations or mathematical reasonings of either are to be even viewed with special suspicion, to say nothing of setting them aside? Clearly not. Their observations and theorems are to be taken on all fours with those of other astronomers and mathematicians; and Newton, instead of being lower, stands much higher in credit than the majority of physicists of perfectly sound cerebral and nervous structure.

Supposing, then, it were agreed that Christianity took its rise in a "decadent" period, whatever that might mean, it would still be necessary to prove either that it is a delusion, or that it is a hindrance to civilisation. Those of us who hold it to have been both get no logical help either from Nietzsche's impeachment (save in certain points of detail) or from the general theorem that art and civilisation and religion are to be tried "by the standard of physiology."

What is "the standard of physiology"? When we ask that, we clear up a confusion in the use

of the term "decadent". Applied to a period or a polity, it stands broadly for a charge of retrogression or decline, whether in political or military efficiency, or in mental energy, or in literary or artistic production. But all this is quite another thing than neurosis, or individual degeneration. The men of a decadent polity or period are not necessarily decadents. Even if we decide that in such a period, by reason of social and economic conditions, degenerates are more numerous than in others, it does not in the least follow that it is the degenerates who rule in politics or in thought. We may, if we please, cut the knot of the problem as to when political or intellectual decadence begins; we may rule that Cæsar (who was epileptoid) was not a decadent; that Roman decadence did not broadly begin till Tiberius or Nero; that in literature Virgil and Horace escape the taint, though it may be considered to be visible in Ovid; and that decadence proceeds thereafter; it will still be unproved and unprovable that the intellectual decline was in terms of physical degeneration, or that it was neurosis that underlay the gradual spread of Christianity. Physiological decay is a perfectly valid explanation of the decline of a once scientific mind, such as that of Pascal or the late Dr. Romanes, to a state of unreasoning religiosity; but there is no sequence from such

cases to the assumption that where a population sinks from a higher to a lower literary output, or loses from its midst the spirit of philosophy and science, the cause is a multiplication of physical degeneracy. The two processes are incommensurable: one is physiological, the other economic, social, political; and it is a mere verbal fallacy to identify them by means of the word "decadence". The rise of Christianity is to be explained in terms of social metabolism; it points to the emergence of the ideals of a slave class in place of those of a ruling and military class; and the progressive rooting of it in polity was a result not of any attraction of multiplying degenerates to a cult of degeneracy, but first of the more or less conscious resort of the Christians to all the forms of attraction which had made the success of the main cults of paganism, and later of the organisation of the Church after the model of the Empire.

When we note that Christianity spread among the Greeks in the period of their complete subordination to the Roman Empire, after all commanding intellectual power had disappeared from among them, it seems plausible to "explain" the process in terms of degeneracy, especially as there was at work in their case a presumable physiological agency, in respect of the breeding of the race from parents of whom

the males had culture and the females none—a factor not considered by Nietzsche. But when we remember that this disparity of the sexes had already been brought about in the time of Plato; that the political decadence of the Greeks begins at latest with their subjection by Philip of Macedon, four hundred years before they heard of Christianity; and that the Byzantine Empire subsisted in a state of apparent equilibrium for a thousand years after Constantine, the formula of decadence is seen to be entirely beside the case. We can certainly predicate of organised Christianity a direct influence for stagnation in thought, art, and polity; but a psychological decadence which sets in in one century and is normal for eighteen centuries is a chimera.

The general theorem ascribed to Nietzsche by his followers, then, is not so much erroneous as incapable of being intelligibly applied to any historic case; and when we analyse his 'Anti-christ', in order to get at his application of it to historic Christianity, we find all too soon that he does but string together in his text incoherent expressions of his own nervous aversion from this or that phase of Christian life. It is pathetic to contrast the process with his own specifications elsewhere of the proper tone, temper, and method of the philosopher. On these heads no man has spoken more to the point than he at

times does. "It is known," he writes in his 'Twilight of the Idols,' "what I require of philosophers, namely to take up their position *beyond* good and evil, to be superior to the illusion of moral sentiment".* This is put in terms of his thesis "that there is no such thing as a moral fact"—a paradox which owes its power of startling to the verbal confusion from which it springs; the first-quoted sentence points to the truth behind. And a simpler form of the same truth is admirably put in the same book, in the excursus on 'What the Germans Lack', where the faults of the German theory of education are thrust upon German notice, and the true principle insisted on.

"The youth have to learn to *see*; they have to learn to *think*; they have to learn to *speak* and *write*; the object in all three cases is a noble civilisation—To learn to *see*; to accustom the eye to quietness, to patience, to reserve; to postpone judgment, to survey and comprehend each case from all sides. This is the first preliminary schooling for intellectuality: *not to react immediately upon a stimulus, but to get the checking, the settling instincts in hand.*"†

It is impossible to describe better the ideal discipline for philosophy, for sociology, for all criticism. But what of all this is there in the criticism of Nietzsche? "It requires," he writes in the preface to the same book, "no little skill

* 'Works,' Eng. trans., vol. xi, p. 147.

† *Id.* p. 162.

to maintain one's cheerfulness when engaged in a sullen and extremely responsible business; and yet, what is more necessary than cheerfulness? Nothing succeeds unless overflowing spirits have a share in it." Most true. And we have only to put together these three utterances in order to describe the exact contrary of the state of mind in which the 'Antichrist' was conceived and written.

I have incidentally admitted that Nietzsche does help us in certain details to understand, to appraise Christianity as a historic force or process. I will go further, and say that some of his critical dicta on this topic have all the vivid accuracy of insight which makes him so often the most stimulating of thinkers, and makes his 'Thus Spake Zarathustra', with all its fundamental incoherence (for it is a collection of essentially disparate discourses), a really great book. Nothing, for instance, could be critically sounder than these passages in the 'Antichrist':—

"Of what account are the contradictions of 'tradition' to me? How can legends of saints be called 'tradition' at all? The stories of saints are the most ambiguous literature that exists; to apply scientific methods to it, *when no documents besides have reached us*, appears to me condemned in principle—mere learned idling. . . . The attempts with which I am acquainted to pick out of the Gospels even the

history of a soul, seem to me the proofs of a detestable psychological frivolity.”*

This condenses the whole argument against the pretence of piecing a real Jesus out of the Gospel mosaic of myth, anthology, fable, and forgery. On the ethical side, again, there is no less cogency (folly of phrase apart) in the following protest against the sentimental fallacy, still seen in our Mr. Lecky, of ascribing abnormal perfection of character and judgment to all martyrs as such.

“The martyr-deaths, to say a word in passing, have been a great misfortune in history; they have *seduced*. The inference of all idiots, women and mob included, to the effect that an affair for which anyone lays down his life (or which, like primitive Christianity, even produces death-seeking epidemics), is of importance—this inference has become an unspeakable drag upon verification, upon the spirit of verification and precaution. The martyrs have injured truth.”†

But these flashes of just insight cannot logically unify Nietzsche's treatise, or reconcile it with his other reasonings on the physiological standard. The thesis of ‘The Antichrist’ is thus put at the start:—

“What is good? All that increases the feeling of power, will to power, power itself, in man.

“What is bad? All that proceeds from weakness.

“What is happiness? The feeling that power increases, that a resistance is overcome.

* ‘Works,’ Eng. trans. xi, 281.

† *Id.* p. 329.

"*Not* contentedness, but more power; *not* peace at any price, but warfare; *not* virtue, but capacity (virtue in the Renaissance style, *virtù*, virtue free from any moralic-acid).

"The weak and ill-constituted shall perish: first principle of *our* charity. And people shall help them to do so.

"What is more injurious than any crime? Practical sympathy for all the ill-constituted and weak.—Christianity."

Here we have the keynote. "Christianity" is conceived as a homogeneous teaching, a single-minded influence, born of degeneracy and creative of degeneracy, individual and social.

"We must not embellish or deck out our Christianity. It has waged a deadly war against this [physiologically successful] higher type of man; it has put in ban all fundamental instincts of this type; it has distilled evil, *the* evil one, out of these instincts:—[putting] the strong man as the typical reprobate, as 'outcast man.' Christianity has taken the part of all the weak, the low, the ill-constituted; it has made an ideal out of the *antagonism* to the preservative instincts of strong life; it has ruined the reason even of the intellectually strongest natures, in that it taught men to regard the highest values of intellectuality as sinful, as misleading, as *temptations*. The most lamentable example: the ruin of Pascal, who believed in the ruin of his intellect by original sin, while it had only been ruined by his Christianity."

Now, this thesis is in diametrical contradiction with the sentiment of the "physiological standard", given in the 'Twilight of the Idols.' The case of Pascal is here represented as one of degeneracy set up by belief, neurosis begun by the

intellectual act of credence. In the other treatise the principle is thus put:—

"The newspaper readers say that this party ruins itself by such and such an error. My higher politics say a party which commits such errors is at an end—its instincts are no longer to be relied upon. Every error, whatever it may be, is the result of degeneration of instinct, disgregation of will; we thereby almost define the bad."^{*}

"If he [the individual] represent descending development, decay, chronic degeneration, or sickening (diseases, taken on the whole, are phenomena which result from decay already present, they are not the causes of it), he has little worth. . . ."[†]

"Pessimism . . . does not increase the infirmity of an age; it is the expression of infirmity. Pessimism itself does not make a single additional decadent."

Well, if ever there was a clear case of congenital physiological decay, of descending life, it was that of Pascal; and if ever there was a case where pietism was the expression of intellectual collapse resulting from physical decay, his is one. Yet in this very case it is that Nietzsche ascribes the collapse to the pietism instead of the pietism to the collapse. It is plain that he has no scientific principle whatever; he does but cast his epithets haphazard at whatever he nervously dislikes, and is satisfied so long as he can stigmatise it somehow. Here again he turns his back on one of his own precepts; that

^{*} *Id.* p. 192.

[†] *Id.* p. 136.

which warns us against the spirit of punishment; for his book is little better than an attempt to wreak on Christianity, as a kind of personified abstraction, a verbal revenge for all the intellectual irritation it has ever caused him. Thus it comes about that there is hardly a single charge in his indictment that does not rebut another. Because Christianity has been called "the religion of sympathy" he actually runs amuck against sympathy, declaring that it "stands in antithesis to the tonic passions which elevate the energy of the feeling of life". Elsewhere he notes, rightly enough, that "the hatred against those thinking differently, the will to persecute," is Christian. Why then concede that Christianity is the religion of sympathy? The true criticism would be that Christianity has *not* promoted sympathy; that it has been the means of creating more numerous and more profound antipathies—antipathies of sect, of church, of creed—than can be traced to any other institution.

In 'Thus Spake Zarathustra', Nietzsche has himself uttered the gospel of Sympathy in words that transcend all Christian teaching. All this goes by the board when, in his worsening neurosis, he clutches at the presumptive brute element in himself as the anchor of health and strength, and makes sympathy a form of decad-

ence. That "Christianity has taken the part of all the weak, the low, the ill-constituted," is not nearly so true as that Nietzsche himself, in his higher and saner moods, has taken their part. Christianity in history has lent itself as readily to tyranny and to fiendish cruelty as to the cause of the poor; having in fact taken shape and color in all ages from the ruling temper, whatever that might be. Always a drag on mind, it yields to the most various moral pressures, short of that of universal humanitarianism. The summing up of the relation of Christianity to scientific ethics (of which "sympathy" is assuredly one of the fundamental principles) may be put thus:—Theoretic Christianity conceives of sympathy only "in Christ", and "in Christ" loses sight of all moral and biological discriminations, blindly cherishing many elements of degeneration; whereas scientific ethics knows no limit to sympathy whatever, yet aims at the passionless elimination of all forms of degeneracy.

There is, indeed, always a risk of fallacy in speaking of Christianity as a unity or entity. Nietzsche carries the fallacy to an extreme, often identifying Christianity as a whole with one or other of the elements which have at times arisen in it—as those of asceticism, abasement of energy and

joy, recoil from beauty and health, and consequent glorification of poverty and disease. All these tendencies certainly can draw countenance from the Christian books; but when the professing Christian is told that in virtue of these his religion is one of decadence, he has only to reply that Spain the Conqueror was Christian, that Charlemagne was Christian, that the Crusades were Christian, that the France of Louis XIV, and the England of the Edwards and of Henry V and of Chatham were Christian—that, in short, Christianity can go as well with the pride of life and the ginger that is hot in the mouth, as with decadence and the Salvation Army. Nietzsche, in fact, by reason of his random fashion of attack, is more of a stumbling-block than of a help in the warfare of rationalism against religion.

It is needless, then, to discuss one by one all Nietzsche's criticisms of Christianity in "The Antichrist". Suffice it to say that they stand for no such process of study as he himself prescribes to all students; that in many cases they destroy each other; and that they clash hopelessly with the philosophy of others of his works. His assault on "sympathy" is the rebuttal of his attacks on the Anti-Semites, who may now claim to be applying his principles. The very formula of good and bad with which he sets out

is the negation of his precept that the philosopher should be "superior to the illusion of moral sentiment". To repudiate the *a priori* conception of morals, and then to elevate physiological good and bad into an absolute moral good and bad, is to make very short work of a paradox. Withal, this gospel of a mere animal good and bad is the denial of what was most distinctive in Nietzsche's Zarathustran philosophy. "I teach you Beyond-Man" is the main burden of that. In the 'Twilight of the Idols' the "Beyond-Man" is at the best Cæsar Borgia. In 'The Antichrist' we are hounded back to the brute, the animal man, by way of the hypothetical pagan, the imaginary Dionysiak, who was all strength and appetite and will-to-live. As if the ancient worshippers of Dionysos, of Hercules, of Mithra, and of Jesus were not interchangeable; as if there were more asceticism or less lust in Christian Rome than in Seneca's.

That Nietzsche's "immoralism" was the mere reflex utterance of his own recoil from felt disease becomes more clear with every page of our perusal of him. His last fierce thrusts at the Anti-Semites show how little of reasoned leaning he had to the gospel of primitive egotistic instinct. It is the sufferer's passionate desire for strength that inspires these stamping protests against anything that savors of self-efface-

ment, these shouts for a purely "physiological" ethic. And it is the oscillation between the still possible process of analytic reasoning and the reflex grasp at the physical that accounts for those endless contradictions and re-contradictions on cardinal points. Take this set of pros and cons in æsthetics, scattered through a volume:—

"What is good is easy; everything divine runs with light feet:—the first proposition of my æsthetics."*

"Let anyone read German books; there is no longer the remotest recollection that a technique, a plan of instruction, and a will to reach proficiency are required for thinking—that thinking requires to be learned as dancing requires to be learned."†

"Nothing is beautiful except man; all æsthetics rest on this *naïveté*; it is their first truth."‡

"Even the beauty of a race or family, the pleasantness and kindness of their whole demeanor, is acquired by effort; like genius, it is the final result of the accumulated labor of generations."§

Different views of the problem suggest themselves to the sick thinker in different moods, and each in turn is given as the oracle of truth; diseased self-esteem being alone constant in all his moods. It is thus that he charges it as a vice on Christianity that it represents the "revenge" of the weak on the strong, after laying it down that all is good which "increases the feeling of

* Vol. cited, p. 6.

† *Id.* p. 163.

‡ *Id.* p. 182.

§ *Id.* p. 215.

power, will to power, power itself, in man." As if any revenge were not thus a good.

In fine, one may agree with Nietzsche on many matters; one may hold with him in the main concerning Wagner's music, concerning the greatness of Dostoievsky, concerning the hollowness of Kant, concerning the expediency of burying Christianity, concerning the fallacy of some notions of progress; but one can have no security that his judgment will be justified by his arguments, or that it proceeds upon sufficient knowledge, or that it will be adhered to by himself. No one says true things more trenchantly than he. We may allow him to be, as he claimed, alone among the Germans, the master of the sentence and the aphorism; but his random rabidities of invective and contempt, his sweeping aversions, which embrace in mass now the whole of his fellow-countrymen, now the whole of the English, and anon even the French of his frequent admiration—these infirmities have nothing in common with wisdom and insight; they prove only "the inability *not* to react on every stimulus". The assumption to reduce all problems, all inquiries, to the scope of the sentence and the aphorism, is in the end a fatuity. "Among the mountains," he says in 'Zarathustra,' "the shortest way is from peak to peak; but for that you need long legs." Yes, long

legs, or lawless fantasy, or a whirling brain; and the latter are the easier come by.

We can but treat Nietzsche finally as a pathological case; a brain powerful even in incipient disease; perhaps owing much of its passing power to its very state of commencing dissolution, in which it knows such strange vibrations; but, because of that state, incoherent, contradictory, overweening, systemless. All this we can forgive, or rather we can see it all so sympathetically from the first that we receive no offence which calls for forgiveness; but what shall we say of the disciples who seek to build, out of the disintegrating thought of the stricken man of genius, a scientific creed or code for a scientific world? When Nietzsche denounces Socialism and Democracy and the spirit of equality, we know what we are dealing with—the half truths of the neurotic thinker, the antidote to which may often be found in his own saner work. When he speaks to us of a physiological standard, we can follow the clue, and rectify the theorem, partly with his own help. We agree that progress, to be sociologically sound, must be physiologically so; and we can see for ourselves that it cannot be made physiologically sound until it is made sociologically so. We rectify his intuitions or *naïvetés* by an economics which he did not even attempt to understand, and by

an *a posteriori* sociology which he did not take the trouble to build up. But the attempt to set him up as a guide in life as well as in thought—what is this but a random movement of indiscipline; and how shall it be justified?

Dr. Tille, as we have seen, pronounces Nietzsche the foremost of the German thinkers who seek to measure civilisation by a physiological standard; and he calls this "measuring man by the standard which Darwin has enabled us to apply to nature." But when we turn to 'The Twilight of the Idols,' we find, in the "Roving Expeditions of an Inopportune Philosopher," this:—*

"*Anti-Darwin.*—As regards the celebrated 'struggle for life,' it seems to me, in the meantime, to be more asserted than proved. It occurs, but only as an exception; the general aspect of life is *not* a state of want or hunger; it is rather a state of opulence, luxuriance, and even absurd prodigality; where there is a struggle, it is a struggle for *power*. We must not confound Malthus with Nature. Granted, however, that this struggle exists—and, in fact, it does occur—its results, alas, are the reverse of what the Darwinian school wish, the reverse of what one might perhaps wish, in accordance with them; it is prejudicial to the strong, the privileged, the fortunate exceptions. The species does *not* grow in perfection; the weak again and again get the upper hand of the strong—their large number and their greater cunning are the cause of it. Darwin forgot the intellect (that was English!); *the weak have more intellect.* One

* Vol. cited, p. 178.

must need intellect in order to acquire it; one loses it when it is no longer necessary. He who has strength rids himself of intellect ('let it go hence' is what people think in Germany at present, 'the *Empire* will remain'). As is obvious, under intellect I comprehend foresight, patience, craft, dissimulation, grand self-control, and all modifications of *mimicry*. A great deal of so-called virtue is included under *mimicry*."

If this is the trying of civilisation by a physiological standard, on the lines of Darwin, it is hard to infer what innovation the school of Nietzsche suppose themselves to be making. They had need put their theory a little more clearly than it stands in the works of the Founder.

CROMWELL AND THE HISTORIANS.

(1899.)

I.

IT was inevitable that the tercentenary of Cromwell's birth should bring upon us a hundred addresses in which the manifold and intricate problems of his work and personality are settled out of hand with the confident simplicity that marks the leading article. The trouble had to come; but woe, critically speaking, to those by whom it came. For they constitute, by their number and vehemence and volubility, so striking an instance of a serious and increasing intellectual evil, that if there is ever to be a reaction in the interests of sober thought, it must now begin. The tercentenary tirades are but the popular and more flagrant aspect of a fashion of writing history that for a generation back has been gaining ground among us, to the damage alike of political and moral science. It is one of the paradoxes of our recent literature that two historians out of three habitually write as if the most difficult part of their work were to collate documents, and the easiest part the statement of the final bearing of the facts on our mental and

emotional life. Abstractly speaking, it would seem to be obvious that the reverse is the truth. Collating documents is a hard and tedious task: but it is merely a multiplication of work of an essentially simple kind. Too often, certainly, it is scamped, so that we cannot easily praise too highly the patient seekers who by their diligence repair the negligence of predecessors; but it is work that patience, diligence, and fair intelligence can always compass. It is when the facts are narrated that the essentially difficult task begins—for the historian, that is, who undertakes to give us moral generalisations as well as narrative. But anyone who has read half-a-dozen recent English historians, good or otherwise—say Green, Froude, Gardiner, Freeman, Lecky, and Stubbs—knows that whether their narrative of facts be trustworthy or otherwise, their research deep or superficial, their philosophic or ethical reflections are as often as not on the level of the thought of the pulpit and the leading article. Any generalisation seems to be thought good enough, provided it be serious, sonorous, and touched with moral emotion.

It is not here specially contended that in this respect English historiography has positively retrograded; though that thesis would not be hard to support. The point is that, whatever be the absolute merit of average historical thought to-

day as compared with that of last century, it has not deepened and clarified in the ratio of the advance in exactness of analysis in any other department of mental science. Broadly speaking, the practitioners are slighter thinkers, relatively to their age, than were their predecessors. Hume, Gibbon, even Robertson, in the last century, James Mill and Grote and Hallam in this, were more nearly abreast of all forms of sociological thought in their time than are their successors of our day. Hume had Tory prejudices; Gibbon may have had some anti-theological bias; Mill was a "doctrinaire"; Hallam was a Whig; and Grote perhaps somewhat of a partisan; but for the instructed and unprejudiced minds of their time none of them was vexatiously inadequate in his grasp of moral and historical problems, though all may at times be so for a sociological student now. But if they are, so much more—such is the present contention—are our contemporary historians.

It would be matter for a separate enquiry to make out the causes of this state of things. Probably the main part of the explanation would lie in noting how the increasing burden of documentary toil laid upon all historians by the mere accumulation of research tends to drive off the field the minds with a turn for rigorous thinking and brooding synthesis. It is hard to play

Comte *plus* Gardiner, or double Montesquieu with Stubbs. And at the same time it is comparatively easy to please a large public with more or less vivid narrative and respectably thoughtful comment, without taking more trouble over the latter than goes to as many lines of a sermon. Whatever be the whole explanation, certain it is that from Carlyle onwards our historians, barring Grote, have tended to lose in intellectual weight as they gained in either vividness or learning. Froude is the scandal of the profession, on all counts; but the generalisations of Green are too often a grievance to the intelligence of those who remember the generalisations that went before; those of the scholarly Freeman are almost habitually trivial; and the erudite Stubbs can be at times—if one dare say it—singularly absurd. In two cases out of three, the trouble may be indicated by the word "rhetoric". There are more disagreeable and perhaps more accurate names for the phenomenon; but this one may serve, as it covers not only the habit of empty reflection but that of striving rather for a literary effect than for a scientific result. Frenchmen of the newer scientific school describe the phenomenon as "*de la littérature*". It is this that makes the convulsively vivacious histories of Carlyle so profoundly uninformative. Let the specialists say what they will, his 'Cromwell'

is finally a confession of inability to write history; a dogged dead-lift of Dryasdust labor, vivified by shouts; and his *Friedrich* is at last a vociferous evasion of all the real historical problems. It was presumably the success of Carlyle and Macaulay in their diverse manners that established the fashion of vivacity and the free play of the personal equation; in any case, though we have transcended Macaulay's plane of partisanship and Carlyle's tic and trick of ejaculation, it cannot be said that their historical philosophy is as yet much improved upon by all of our leading performers. They spare us Carlyle's intolerable device of punctuating with whoops his hero's words as well as his own, but they have not exactly transcended his practice as regards the weightier matters of the law.

To come to our special theme: the current treatment of the case of Cromwell by our professed historians and critics of history is not to be compared, for sanity and solidity of criticism, with either the work now done by competent French scholars on the issues of the French Revolution or that done by the English, French, and German historians of Greece and Rome in estimating the personalities of antiquity. We have not advanced on the criticism of Hallam. With a greatly increased knowledge—thanks largely to Professor Gardiner—of the facts of the

English Revolution, we are still treated to ethical estimates of it that savor (it must be said) less of historical philosophy than of pulpit eloquence. *Hinc illæ lacrymæ.*

II.

For a year or two back, our popular instructors have been tuning up for the Cromwell tercentenary on the key set by the closing sentences of Professor Gardiner's lectures on 'Cromwell's Place in History'. With half-a-dozen citations of that estimate, I have not seen one critical remark on its essential weakness. And yet it is hard to believe that its accomplished writer would not be glad to rewrite it if he might. Thus it runs:—

"Royalists painted him as a devil. Carlyle painted him as the masterful saint who suited his peculiar Valhalla. It is time for us to regard him as he really was, with all his physical and moral audacity, with all his tenderness and spiritual yearnings, in the world of action what Shakspeare was in the world of thought, the greatest because the most typical Englishman of all time. This, in the most enduring sense, is Cromwell's place in history. He stands there, not to be implicitly followed as a model, but to hold up a mirror to ourselves, wherein we may see alike our weakness and our strength."

It is necessary to take this judgment to pieces, because it commits all the sins we are here concerned to indict. The central proposition is that Cromwell was "the greatest because the most

typical Englishman" in the world of action, and that Shakspeare was so in the world of thought. What shall we say of it? To assert that any man is the greatest of his countrymen because he is the most typical, is simply to propound a counter-sense. A great man in any nation is great exactly insofar as he is memorably different from the mass of his species. If we turn from the abstract to the concrete issue, the fallacy is no less plain. Cromwell was great precisely because he was unique among the Englishmen of his day in his combination of energy, determination, hand-to-mouth sagacity, and, at a pinch, unscrupulousness. In these matters he was no more typical of most Englishmen than of most Germans, Frenchmen, Italians, or Russians. Of the case of Shakspeare it is hardly worth while to speak: his psychological receptivity and his peculiar intensity of utterance are plainly as abnormal in England as anywhere else: it would indeed be rather less difficult to find partial parallels to them in other nations than to produce them in our own. Keeping to Cromwell, one must needs pronounce it a proof of the ensnaring tendency of the platform that such a scholar as Professor Gardiner should be capable of telling the mass of us that Cromwell was strong with "our" strength.

That he was weak with "our" weakness is

doubtless much less untrue, since weakness is so common; and in any case the proposition is immeasurably better worth discussing. There can be no profit to the community from flat flattery: there may always be some from blame. The "weaknesses" of Cromwell lay (1) in the incapacity for self-study which, keeping him in the habit of ascribing his volitions to supernatural guidance, so naturally earned him the repute of hypocrisy; (2) in his religious fanaticism, which made him on that score ready to plunge into a civic strife that on other issues he pronounced detestable; (3) his inability to think out any durable political system; and (4) his execrable incapacity for just treatment of an alien race and creed. It is perhaps true that these faults are more ingrained in Englishmen than in men of other nations, though they were sadly common in all in Cromwell's day. But the trouble is that, though Cromwell's sins towards Ireland are admitted by more than one of his eulogists—by Dr. Gardiner, and Mr. Morley, and Mr. Harrison, for instance—nobody brings home the other "weaknesses" to the public conscience; rather the fanaticism is imputed as righteousness; and the idea of any weakness passes over the national understanding without impressing it, while the unhappy flattery about "our strength" befools it. The phrase is as far astray for Cromwell's

England as for ours. From Dr. Gardiner's own pages we learn that "the dealings of the Presbyterians, who formed the majority in both Houses, with the army in the first half of 1647, may be taken as an example of almost unexampled (*sic*) stupidity".* Then Cromwell was anything but typical of that majority. Yet again: "Large numbers of the soldiers had no great interest in ecclesiastical or political ideas, and would contentedly have returned to their homes if only the pay justly due to them had been secured". Cromwell can hardly have typified those large numbers; and as little did he typify the mob of conceited blunderers round the king. He did not even typify the men who began the Rebellion. "Constitutional questions," Dr. Gardiner admits, "he never thoroughly mastered, and [he] was on the whole indifferent to them." On that side, then, he typified neither the strength nor the weakness of his nation or his day.

How then comes such an authority to venture on such a proposition? By reason, it seems to me, of that habit of didactic rhetoric, borrowed from and inspired by the pulpit, which has so grown on our later historians; and which Dr. Gardiner shares with much less weighty specialists—with Green and Froude, for instance—

* 'Lectures,' pp. 34-5.

as well as with Bishop Stubbs. When the swing of the prevailing type of peroration has begun, language becomes merely a matter of sonority of phrase and the thrill of moral feeling: philosophy and logic go by the board. The very formula 'Cromwell's Place in History' suggests all the weakness of the vein; for the phrase has really no scientific content. We want to know what Cromwell did, and why he did it; what he put down and what he set up; and these things Dr. Gardiner does in large measure enable us to realise; but talk of any man's "place in history" belongs properly to the vocabulary of the sentimental journalist and the emotional lecturer. In his great history, Dr. Gardiner is always pulling us up with estimates which imply the Nonconformist evangel and the Puritan legend; weighing Laud, for instance, in a balance hardly more even than Macaulay's, trying him almost by modern standards while Eliot and Cromwell are viewed by the optic of their age and finally extolled for their mere sincerity. Not that our historian is steadily biassed. He treats Strafford with admirable fairness, and makes him newly intelligible; but wherever an opening arises for moral reflection on the lines of the conventional respect for Puritanism, rhetoric engulfs criticism. Laud's want of spirituality is labored over in the interest of a particular theological taste; and it is

with a clear implication of censure that we are told he had come to be capable of "looking upon those who opposed his opinions as his enemies, and upon his enemies as the enemies of God".† The words hold exactly true of Cromwell, as Dr. Gardiner repeatedly shows elsewhere; but for poor Laud there are no saving clauses, beyond an admission of his courage. Eliot, as intolerant as Laud,‡ finally figures as the haloed Winkelried who "gathered into his own bosom the spear-points of the adverse host;"§ as if Laud had not done as much; and as if Eliot's lesser martyrdom cancelled the fact of his purposing to punish ferociously all the opinions *he* thought wrong. "To Eliot belongs the *glory* of being the first to see plainly . . . that Charles's isolation was a fruitful seed of evil." What then of the glory of those who foresaw evil from the policy of Parliament? "His countrymen would follow by-and-by through the breach which he had made at the cost of his life." Thus the Arminians and other heretics whom he would have persecuted and slain are blotted out of the reckoning. It is the historical philosophy of a sect.

† 'History', ed. 1894, vii, 150.

‡ *Id.* v, 191; vii, 42-3.

§ *Id.* vii, 122.

III.

These and kindred estimates strike the key for the more metallic rhetoric lately delivered to us on the Cromwellian theme from the hustings of the newspaper Press. One of the most qualified and respected performers is Mr. Frederic Harrison, already author of a standard monograph on Cromwell, and rather more Cromwellian than the Nonconformists for commemorative purposes. Mr. Harrison is in the position of having to admit all that Dr. Gardiner can say against Cromwell's policy in Ireland, while anxious, in the spirit of the Comtist calendar, to preserve an undiminished veneration for the Protector as a great Englishman; and where Dr. Gardiner, when intent on history and unpreoccupied by peroration, exhibits the final negativity of Cromwell's work, Mr. Harrison insists on the pose of gratitude as regards the English section of the British population, leaving the Irish and Scotch to their critical reflections. The very suggestion of such a parti-colored verdict betrays the unjudicial spirit of the appeal. Historical science at this time of day is really not to be adjusted to the local bias of Philippians, Colossians, Galatians, and Ephesians. A Scotchman who should frame his view of Cromwell with a squint towards Dunbar would simply not deserve to be listened to; and if Cromwell's

memory may, as Mr. Harrison seems to think, reasonably be execrated by instructed Irishmen, it is a strange counsel that instructed Englishmen should go on blessing it.

"As to Ireland, Cromwell remorselessly carried out the atrocious policy of his age and of our country. For my part, I never will palliate or condone it. And the 'curse of Cromwell' in the mouths of Irishmen will long rest on his memory and on our peace."

Such are Mr. Harrison's words. Still "we" are to overflow with reverence and gratitude to the accursed one. The main reason, if we are to infer critical emphasis from the relative space given by the critic to the portions of his thesis, would appear to be that Cromwell was a very energetic administrator and conqueror:—

"The unique merit of Cromwell's government was his genius for administration, for securing efficiency in every department, for selecting the right man for every duty, for recognising and using every kind of capacity in every department. His success in this crowning art of the statesman has perhaps never been equalled in our own history, hardly in that of Europe, unless it be by Richelieu and Frederick the Great. This plain yeoman, who had tilled his farmstead until past forty years, stepped forth into public life, made himself a thorough soldier, created a consummate army, decided a tremendous civil war, conquered two neighbouring kingdoms, guided a national revolution, stemmed it back by organising a solid conservative government, chose as his deputies the most capable soldiers, seamen, governors, diplomatists, financiers, lawyers, ministers, and publicists who could be found to serve

the Commonwealth, and in five years he had formed the strongest Government in Europe, and had made his country the leading Power in the world."

If Mr. Harrison will say that just such honor as he accords to Cromwell is rightly to be paid by Frenchmen to Napoleon, the ethical issue will be a good deal simplified. In that case we are simply dealing with strong-man-worship, which does indeed appear to be a main element in the current glorification of Cromwell; and as regards the passage before us we should only have to question whether Chatham did not show about as much administrative capacity as did Oliver. But Mr. Harrison does not venture to leave his plea for Cromwell on a par with a Chauvinist plea for Napoleon. He demurs to Dr. Gardiner's summing-up that Cromwell's positive work vanished, and that only his negative work survived; and he argues, justly enough so far, that "in great revolutions of nations and societies there is no arbitrary distinction between negative and positive results". But when it comes to demonstration, we have this:—

"It would be easy to show that Alexander, Julius Cæsar, Charlemagne, Richelieu, or Napoleon left no permanent results on history, because their positive work vanished and their institutions were swept away or developed in new forms. That Cromwell's 'ideas' have failed is manifestly untrue. *What, then, mean our eulogies, centenaries, statues, and honors to his memory*—our grateful sense of his hatred of oppression,

of persecution, of his zeal for good government, justice, morality, religion in things public as well as private? Let us not pore ourselves blind over the records of institutions and negotiations. The ideas of Cromwell live deep down in the hearts of Englishmen."

Observe how the question raised is answered. "The heart answers, I have felt," like the prosecutor who a few years ago, claiming to identify the man who robbed him in the dark, told the magistrate he "never knew his feeling to wrong him". The charge against Cromwell is, first, that his system could not hold together, and, secondly, that he himself was an armed oppressor, a doer of "atrocious" injustice—the word is Mr. Harrison's—a determined persecutor of Catholics while ready to go to war to protect continental Protestants. For the rest, zeal for religion was just what actuated the policy he rebelled against. Mr. Harrison's only semblance of rebuttal on these heads is (1) the suggestion that the other conquerors he mentions had no better fortune, which is simply not the fact; (2) the statement that the Protectorate "was a constant effort to restore the ravages and the temper bred in the civil war", which is an extravagant error; and (3) the plea that if Cromwell ruled by armed force, nevertheless his army was of a very superior sort; a line of reasoning which points us back to the good old thesis of the domestic virtues of Charles. But

let us hear the best that Mr. Harrison has to say on the affirmative side of his case.

"Though Cromwell did not found Parliamentary government, nor religious liberty, nor the legal and administrative system that he prematurely set up, he made all these things possible in the end, *little as he foresaw what he was doing*. Our subsequent history, no doubt, was a compromise, and much of it was as anti-Cromwellian as it could be. But it was Cromwell who, in the evolution of the English nation, made our subsequent history possible."

"It is far from clear that without him the finer part of the English people would not have succumbed to the baser part, that the Stuarts would not have founded at last some such monarchy as that of the Louis in France. Those who understand the inner history of the Civil War know that, down to the battle of Marston, if not down to the New Model, the issue was far from clear—and Marston and Naseby were essentially Cromwell's triumphs. And those who understand English history know that the struggle was a long one, that it lasted for at least sixty years from the Long Parliament to the Act of Settlement, that what old Whigs call the 'Revolution' was a mere episode and after-glow of the Commonwealth."

Here we come to relevant ratiocination. Let us then see what the reasoning is worth.

IV.

It may stand without question that but for Cromwell the Parliamentary side might have been defeated in the Civil War; and even that, but for him, the Parliamentary cause might have been ruined after victory in the field by the fac-

tious strifes of the sects. His military and executive capacity is above discussion: no Englishman of his age came near him; and he will always have his "place in history" as a great man of action. But all that is nothing to the present purpose. The reasons against worshipping him as a constructor of English liberty or promoter of civilisation are these:—(1) that after taking arms in the name of Parliamentary government against a king who wanted his own way, he annihilated Parliamentary government because it would not give *him* his own way; (2) that he thus destroyed for the time being the general faith in Parliamentary government, and turned a nation partly prepared for republicanism into one that grovelled before hereditary monarchy; and (3) that in leaving everything to collapse after his death, with nothing but his nerveless son to hinder, he showed a quite stupendous forethoughtlessness, a constructive impotence as signal as his destructive and coercive energy. This is substantially the relevant form of the charge which Dr. Gardiner, who helps to formulate it, balances by the rhetorical formula "greatest but most typical", and Mr. Harrison by the plea now under notice. The assertion that Cromwell, who suppressed Parliament and governed by military force, set up a "solid Conservative Government", is worse than a

begging of the question, it is a flouting of all the facts.

In merely stating the charge, we implicitly counter half of Mr. Harrison's argument. He assumes that the Stuarts did *not* "found at last some such monarchy as that of the Louis in France". Now the plain sequel to the Protectorate was that they *did* set up such a monarchy. It was simply because of the slackness of Charles II and his hereditary infelicity in the choice of servants, that his reign did not consummate the process; and the more sedulous rule of James did so far consummate it that nothing but his tremendous blunder of embracing Catholicism prevented his becoming one of the most irresistibly arbitrary kings in Europe. The acceptance of the principle of arbitrary rule was practically as complete in the England of his day as it was in France after the Fronde, and for similar reasons. The Protectorate had discredited insurrection in England as fatally as the Fronde had done in France; a temper of submission to monarchy was bred in both cases by the demonstration of the endless evils of its contrary. A study of the literature of the subject will show that whereas Usher, writing at the request of Charles I, could adduce no great body of recent authority for the principle of passive obedience, the reign of Charles II produced

nearly as many declarations of it as the whole preceding part of the Christian era.

The result was that James found himself hedged about with divinity, wielding, thanks to Cromwell, a standing army which could easily suppress any mere insurrection, and confronted by no practical element of resistance save the religious fanaticism which repelled his. Had he remained an Anglican Protestant, English constitutionalism could have been annihilated in his reign without difficulty. And to this end Cromwell had wrought not only by overthrowing what constitutionalism there was, but by generating a new cult of Cæsarism. Whatever may be thought of the politics of Milton, it is clear that Dryden was prepared for his later creed of absolutism by his early admiration of Cromwell the Conqueror. Hobbes's teaching in 'Leviathan' was more welcome to Cromwell than to most Royalists. The spirit in which many Englishmen hailed the successful Protector was exactly that of the Imperialist of all ages; and the cult of the imperator easily slides into the cult of hereditary absolutism. It was through no survival of Cromwell's ideas "deep down in the hearts of Englishmen"—Mr. Harrison in another passage expressly complains that "for two hundred and fifty years the English people who owed him so much (all but a remnant of

stalwart men) reviled his memory and ridiculed his life"—but through a series of fortunate chances, that England sixty years after his death found itself under a constitutional government. Dr. Gardiner well decides that "it was not Cromwell who founded religious liberty in England. His system perished at the Restoration; and when the idea was revived under the guise of toleration it came from another quarter altogether. It was not from Puritanism, high or low, that the gift was received, but from the sons of those Cavaliers and Presbyterians who had been Cromwell's bitterest enemies."* The historian would perhaps endorse the further statements: (1) that Cromwell cared for religious liberty only as between Protestant sect and sect; and (2) that neither High Churchmen nor Presbyterians would have achieved fuller liberty had it not been that James turned Catholic; (3) that his successor was closely hampered by his unpopularity as a foreigner; and (4) that finally the first Georges, unable to speak the language, were forced to rely on a Constitutional Minister who established their dynasty by a prudent Parliamentaryism.

V.

Thus repelled by a comparison of the facts,

* 'Cromwell's Place in History,' p. 110.

the claim for Cromwell as a constructive statesman fares no better when we examine the actual tendency of his system as it stood at his death. Those exultations over the pitch of "greatness" to which he raised his country by means of armaments then unparalleled in post-feudal English history, should put critical people on investigating the nature of his policy. Again Dr. Gardiner sums up the actual situation justly and weightily:—

"English writers have been prompt to recognise that the rise of a successful general to power in France was the prelude to the Napoleonic wars. They have hardly realised that, except for four months, from April to August, 1654, the whole of the Protectorate was a time either of open war or of active preparation for war, and that even during those months the Protector was hesitating, not whether he should keep the peace or not, but merely what enemy he should attack."*

This frenetic militarism was being carried on at a cost which would have astounded the men who began the Civil War.

"In 1635 the revenue of Charles I had been estimated at £618,000. In 1654 the revenue stood at £2,250,000. . . . The army had swollen to 57,000, and the expenditure was estimated at £2,670,000, thus showing a deficit of £420,000, which would probably in practice work out at a higher figure."†

Long ago, Burnet, so practically well-informed

* 'Cromwell's Place in History.' pp. 89-90.

† P. 97.

in so many ways, wrote of Cromwell that "it was generally believed that his life and all his arts were exhausted at once, and that if he had lived much longer he could not have held things together"; and Thurloe tells how low his borrowing credit had fallen in the City, whose heart, says Burnet, he had lost through the trade losses incurred in his war with Spain. Dr. Gardiner thus puts the case:—

"Every year the impossibility of meeting the expenses of the fleet was more clearly revealed, and the condition of the seamen deteriorated in consequence. During the later years of the seventeenth century and the greater part of the eighteenth, France suffered loss from attempting to put forth her power by land and sea at the same time. With far less excuse Oliver was guilty of the same mistake."†

So much for finance; on the side of ethics the policy of the Protector is no more seemly. It is pretty clear that he decided to fight Spain rather than France—and to fight somebody he had the ancient motive of the tyrant—simply because he could thereby better count on getting bullion. His wars in the West Indies were wars for plunder, and even at that they were failures. Let Dr. Gardiner once more pass judgment:—

"The war which he projected was a war for material gains—a war, *indeed*, which opened out the path of

† P. 101.

Empire for England, *but* which, conducted as it was after the fashion of an ambuscade, without notice given that hostilities were decided on, failed to commend itself to the conscience of England or the world."§

In Dr. Gardiner's opinion, he had fallen below the Puritan standpoint and become "worldly". It would perhaps be still more judicial to say that he showed how little difference there was between a Puritan and a Cavalier when it came to questions of international ethics and ideals; and that he was anticipating by two or three centuries that reviving appetite for national piracy which has in our own day found so much favor among Englishmen of all shades of theology. It is to be noted that even Dr. Gardiner has an "indeed" and a "but" when he touches on the theme of "empire". But in his larger history he is moved to confess that the war on Spain, begun in deliberate deceit, is a "sorry spectacle", and that it was planned "after the fashion of a midnight conspirator".*

In any case, Cromwell's policy is not now to be vindicated by the eloquence of Mr. Harrison, any more than by the peroration of Dr. Gardiner. The rhetoric which is now doing duty for counsel is really a relapse from a more rational frame

§ 'Cromwell's Place in History,' pp. 93-4.

* 'History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate,' ii (1897), 475-6.

of mind, attained and maintained in despite alike of Hume and Carlyle. It is really not true, to begin with, that down till Carlyle's time Cromwell was merely reviled and ridiculed, save by a remnant of stalwarts. "He was despised and rejected of men," declaims Mr. Harrison. "We hid our faces from him." Of a verity "we" did no such thing. Even Clarendon admitted his judgment and capacity to be wonderful, declaring that he was one of those men "*quos vituperare ne inimici quidem possunt, nisi ut simul laudent*"—"whom even enemies could not denounce without at the same time giving praise". Bishop Burnet held the balances with remarkable impartiality, neither reviling nor ridiculing, nor averting his face, but giving much praise with some blame; and his history has always stood for a large body of English opinion. The one eminent British historian who has since Clarendon and Burnet represented the Royalist view is Hume; and even Hume's account of Cromwell is far from answering to Mr. Harrison's description. "By using well," writes Hume, "that authority which he had attained by fraud and violence, he has lessened, if not overpowered, our detestation of his enormities, by our admiration of his success and of his genius."†

† 'History,' ch. lvii, § 9.

And again: "On the whole, his character does not appear more extraordinary and unusual by the mixture of so much absurdity with so much penetration, than by his tempering such violent ambition and such enraged fanaticism with so much regard to justice and humanity".‡ This is about the highest stress of anti-Cromwellian statement among our leading historians since Cromwell's own day; and save for the over-emphasis of some of the terms of praise as well as of blame, it is substantially just.

The notion that Carlyle created an absolute revolution of feeling is a delusion. Hallam actually anticipated some of Mr. Harrison's praise, applying similar standards when he wrote "that it is but just to say that the maritime glory of England may first be traced from the era of the Commonwealth in a track of continuous light"; and he even pronounced that Cromwell's attack on Spain, though made "with little pretence certainly of justice", was planned "not by any means, as I conceive, with the impolicy sometimes charged against him".

And whereas Hallam criticised Cromwell unfavorably as compared with Napoleon in the matter of legislative capacity, Macaulay reversed

‡ Ch. lxi, end.

the judgment, and passed on "our great countryman" a sustained eulogy almost as highly pitched as Mr. Harrison's own, declaring finally that "even to the present day his character, though constantly attacked, and scarcely ever defended, is popular with the great body" of Englishmen. This was written in 1828, before Carlyle had produced anything more important than his 'Life of Schiller'. Macaulay's panegyric is in fact as excessive in its way as Carlyle's, and claims for Cromwell all that Dr. Gardiner denies, crediting him with a perfectly balanced "intellectual health", a perfectly dignified deportment, and a perfect purity of purpose to the end, in defiance or disregard of all the evidence to the contrary. He enlarges on the Laudian persecution, and burkes the fact that the Presbyterians were eager to be bloodier persecutors than Laud. The pro-Cromwellian reaction, such as it was, was probably as much the work of Macaulay as of Carlyle, whose hysterics must have been for the typical Englishman a good deal less persuasive than the other's more lucid declamation. But even the Tory Southey, writing in 1821 in the *Quarterly Review*, passed upon Cromwell a judgment in which he is credited with good sense, good nature, and a love of equity, culture, and social peace—a character, in short, which only the law of self-

preservation could deflect to severity and despotism. §

On the other hand, as against both Carlyle and Macaulay, Green had arrived at a tolerably balanced judgment, which drew for thoughtful readers a moral far more favorable in the end to Cromwell's memory than are the idolatrous verdicts which crumble at the touch of cool criticism—the moral, namely, that Cromwell's career was finally a failure to his own moral sense, and that his vehement protestations were the sign of his perturbation. Green's estimate too is flawed by rhetoric, the bane, as we have said, of so much of our modern historiography; but he gave his readers a comparatively sound moral lead as compared with the imperialism that is now preached from the literary pulpits.

VI.

Surely it ought now to be no perplexing task to apply at least the practical lesson of Cromwell's case. To pass judgment on all its aspects, indeed—to state in terms of a scrupulous comparative ethic his merits and demerits at every

§ See the passage quoted by Vaughan, 'History of England Under the Stuarts and the Commonwealth,' 1840, p. 505, *note*. Vaughan even pronounces Southey's the most impartial estimate of Cromwell that had appeared up to 1840. It appears in No. 50 of the *Quarterly*, vol. xxv. See pp. 341, 345, 347.

stage, to settle how far he is rationally to be excused on the score of a fanatical "sincerity" as compared with men who followed their interests without pleading divine prerogative at every step—all this is certainly a problem calling for rather more vigilant analysis than has been given to it by any of the historians. The fashion in which Cromwell's power of self-deception is made a virtue on the score of being "religious" is a warning, not only against conventional points of view, but against their contraries, not only in his case but in that of men of very opposite type. But there is really no call to choose between the kind of criticism which, according to Dr. Gardiner, accuses him of having "sinned against the light", whatever that may mean, and the rhetoric which affirms that Carlyle "drove home to the bottom of our conscience as a people our folly, ingratitude, and shame," and that "years and years of remorse will hardly suffice to expiate our offence". It is not too much to say that rational politics and rational historiography are hardly compatible with the temper which dictates such heroics.

The practical lesson, to put the matter baldly, is that the Civil War stood on both sides for a way of looking at life which ought by this time to be obsolete, and had better speedily be made so. The fashion in which its history is still

handled, however, is the expression of a traditional sympathy with the ideals involved which is irreconcilable with a rational relation to social problems in our own time. For beliefs which were pernicious delusions, for a temper which belied the claims it made to a self-renouncing inspiration, we are constantly asked to cherish admiration or reverence; when the simple fact that the Civil War brought everything from bad to worse, and landed Cromwell in the negation of every political principle for which he had drawn the sword, is the damning impeachment of all the ideals involved. We are expected to condemn the divine right of kings, but to respect the divine right of fanaticism; to honor the religious purpose of Cromwell while despising the religious purpose of James II. In reality we are standing very much at the early seventeenth century level of political thought, if we do not realise that the whole imbroglio, with all the ensuing political demoralisation, stands for the bewildering influence of supernaturalist creeds. If we are really weak still with the weakness of Cromwell in the matter of our philosophy of life, our capacity for insane delusion, and our consequent blindness to the first elements of political science, we may well grovel before his strength, though not even that could in such event save us.

Whatever our theology or philosophy may

teach us to say about "sinning against the light", we are entitled to say that Cromwell had no political light where other men had it. It is still the custom to treat the proposals of Lilburne* for a democratic constitution as the merest craziness: even Dr. Gardiner, while admitting that they had a rational side, is willing to let it be imputed to Lilburne as a "fault" that he was ahead of his time. On that view, every man on the Commonwealth side is past forgiveness. Lilburne pointed to the one way, if any there were, in which the Commonwealth could be so rooted in the national interest and habit as to secure it against the Restoration; and if only Cromwell had been equally intelligent and equally principled he might have modified Lilburne's plan where necessary and done something to checkmate the royalist reaction. But Lilburne is dismissed as a dreamer, and Cromwell extolled as a wise conservator of use of and wont, in the face of the fact that the Protectorate ruptured the entire structure of the English State. Says Dr. Gardiner:—

"To Cromwell, this flinging away of all respect for established institutions was most distasteful. . . . He instinctively turned against a proposal to cast the institutions of the country into the melting-pot, after the

* "The most turbulent, but the most upright and courageous of human kind" (Hume, ch. ix, § 13).

fashion practised by the makers of modern France a century and a half later. Those who presented an ideal constitution might satisfy themselves; but what likelihood was there that they would satisfy others?"†

This of a man who by force abolished Parliamentary rights, then packed Parliament, then coerced it, then packed it afresh, and then abolished it; who governed the country by major-generals; eked out his revenue by systematic confiscation; shamelessly coerced his own law courts; spoke of the Magna Charta with grossly ribald derision; sold captives, including women, into West Indian slavery; did the same by troublesome opponents; kept on foot a great standing army at a ruinous expense; desired to have himself suddenly made king; and finally left his power to a powerless son, without even an attempt to guard against the imminent deluge of reaction. The "makers of modern France" at least kept out legitimacy for nigh a generation, and went to the melting pot in a rather less headlong fashion than did the Englishman. Concerning the query, "what likelihood was there that they would satisfy others?" one can but say that it reads somewhat fantastically as put on behalf of the Lord Protector.

Against such fashions of handling history it seems time to protest. The substantial impot-

† P. 40.

ence of Cromwell as a constructive politician is surely about as clear as the greatness of his faculty for war and militarist organisation; and it is at least as necessary for men to-day to recognise the former as it ever was to assert the latter. And when a leading historian and a leading Communist unite in treating as "typical" an English statesman whom they admit to have dealt with Ireland, in 1649, in "profound ignorance of Irish social history prior to 1641", and to have "enormously increased by his drastic treatment" Ireland's evils, it seems fair to suggest that even from an English point of view it is rather more necessary to change the "type" than to enshrine it.

VII.

This way of holding the balances, however, still recommends itself in large measure even to Mr. John Morley, who combines, as no other of our recent writers on Cromwell has done, the habit of historic criticism with the knowledge of political practice in all its difficulty. He of all men shows, of course, the clearest recognition of the enormity of Cromwell's malfeasance in Ireland, declaring of him that he "goes to work with a want of insight and knowledge that puts his Irish statesmanship far below Strafford's".*

* 'Oliver Cromwell,' ed. 1900, p. 294.

With strict justice Mr. Morley points out how Cromwell, in the act of calling the Irish people in mass "hypocrites", was dishonest enough to pretend that they never had had any grievance against the English Government, after he had "stood by the side of Pym in their denunciations of Strafford in all their excess and all their ignorance of Irish conditions, precisely for the violation of English law and the spirit of it throughout his long government of Ireland".† "As if," adds Mr. Morley, "what he calls the equal benefit of the protection of England had meant anything but fraud, chicane, plunder, neglect, and oppression, ending in that smouldering rage, misery, and despair which Cromwell so ludicrously describes as the deep peace and union of a tranquil sheepfold, only disturbed by the ravening greed of the priestly wolves of Rome." No less plainly does the critic deal with the hypocrisy of Cromwell's pretence that he was not "meddling with any man's conscience" when he suppressed Catholic rites. And his summing up of Oliver's confiscations and slaughters, devastations, depopulations, and deportations, is that it was all a "clumsy failure", to which "no appreciation of Oliver's greatness should blind rational men".

So much for the case of Ireland. As to Eng-

† *Id.* p. 295.

land, it may suffice, without spending time over the primary issues, to note in Mr. Morley's pages such judgments as this on the Protector's House of Lords:

"Confident in his own good faith, and with a conviction that *to frame laws in view of contingent possibilities has a tincture of impiety in it as a distrust of Providence*, Cromwell never thought out the scheme; he left it in the Humble Petition and Advice with leaks, chinks, and wide apertures that might horrify the newest apprentice of a Parliamentary draughtsman;"†

and this as to his foreign policy:—

"Oliver's ideal was not without a grandeur of its own, but it was incongruous in its parts, and prolonged trial of it could only have made its unworkableness more manifest."§

Finally, let us consider Mr. Morley's significantly balanced summing-up:—

"In saying that Cromwell had the spirit, insight, and grasp that fit a man to wield power in the greatest affairs, we only repeat that he had the instinct of government, and this is a very different thing from either a taste for the abstract ideas of politics, or the passion for liberty. The instinct of order has been as often the gift of a tyrant as of a hero, as common to some of the worst hearts in human history as to some of the best. Cromwell was no Frederick the Great, who spoke of mankind as *diese verdammte Rasse*—that accursed tribe. He belonged to the rarer and nobler type of governing men who see the golden side, who count faith, pity, hope, among the counsels of practical wisdom, and who for political power must

† *Id.* p. 450.

§ *Id.* p. 447.

ever seek a moral base. This is a key to men's admiration for him. His ideals were high; his fidelity to them, while sometimes clouded, was still enduring; his ambition was pure. Yet it can hardly be accident that has turned him into one of the idols of the school who hold, shyly as yet in England, but nakedly in Germany, that might is a token of right, and that the strength and power of the State is an end that tests and justifies all means."*

The last sentence so drastically qualifies the others that criticism is almost disarmed by its candor. But the problem is reopened when we recall the earlier judgment passed by Mr. Morley in his turn upon Lilburne, which we must not here forget:—

"The cry of the political Leveller was led by Lilburne, one of the men whom all revolutions are apt to engender—intractable, narrow, dogmatic, pragmatic, clever hands at syllogisms, liberal in uncharitable imputation and malicious construction, honest in their rather questionable way, animated by a pharisaic love of self-applause which is in truth not any more meritorious nor any less unsafe than vain love of the world's applause; in a word, not without sharp insight into theoretic principle, and thinking quite as little of their own ease as of the ease of others, but without a trace of the instinct for government, or a grain of practical common sense."†

Now, postponing for the moment the psychological issue as to what is meant by "instinct for government" in the two judgments before us, let us first ask squarely (1) which of the other char-

* *Id.* p. 470.

† *Id.* pp. 280-1.

acterisations here passed upon Lilburne might not with equal fitness, on Mr. Morley's own showing, be passed upon Cromwell; and, on the other hand, (2) which of the praises passed upon Cromwell might not with equal fitness be given to Lilburne? Did not Lilburne seek a moral basis in politics a good deal more industriously than Cromwell ever did? Was *he* more devoid of "faith, pity, hope", than the Cromwell who mangled Ireland on a false pretence of just vengeance? Were Lilburne's ideals low? Was *his* constancy frail? Was *his* ambition impure? And has he ever by any accident furnished an idol or a model to the school of brute force and brutal reasoning?

Turning towards the psychological problem, let us ask next whether Cromwell's fashion of justifying himself in all his deeds as the chosen instrument of God, is a grain less "pharisaic" or less "unsafe" than the particular sort of self-righteousness which Mr. Morley cannot forgive in Lilburne. Was not Cromwell, by Mr. Morley's showing, repeatedly "untractable, narrow, dogmatic, pragmatic"; was not he in Ireland, and earlier and later, "liberal in uncharitable imputation and malicious construction;"† and was his

† Compare, on this point, Cromwell's wholesale charges against the Parliament which he suppressed in 1653. 'Whitelocke's Memoirs,' p. 520.

"way" of being honest a whit less "questionable" than Lilburne's? Nay, was not Lilburne by far the honestest man of the two, as having the simpler course to follow? And is it actually to be a reproach to the reformer that he reasoned well, and had sharp insight into theoretic principle, where Cromwell often reasoned absurdly, at times basely, and was barely capable of discerning a theoretic principle save when the urgencies of his own task enlightened him on simple rules of public action?

And what, finally, becomes of the concept of "instinct for government"? That Lilburne was a Solon, I am not at all concerned to prove: he was simply a very intelligent, very honest, and entirely brave man, who early saw that the new "Commonwealth" was going to be as tyrannically governed as the old Kingdom, and who with utter fearlessness impeached the authorities, as their first leaders had impeached Strafford. For demanding that the heads of the Commonwealth should do as they had demanded to be done by, he was promptly prosecuted, on pretexts as bad as any ever used by Charles; and it was no thanks to the authorities that Lilburne, saved by the jury, died in his bed. How such a man would have acted had he himself been placed in a position of responsibility is a question over which it is interesting to speculate. All we can

confidently say is that it would not be lack of honesty, but too absolute concern for honesty, that would have made him miscarry. And if we see reason to think that, with his faith in the principle of human reciprocity, he could not by his gospel have saved the Commonwealth whatever were his power, we may fairly enough set him down as a miscalculator.

But on that principle, once more, what becomes of the reputation of Cromwell? If he is to be credited with "instinct for government" on the bare score that he readily resorted to force in an age of force, he simply stands on all fours with Charles. The sole difference between them is that Cromwell succeeded in the resort to force where Charles failed. Is it to this, then, that the claim as to his "instinct for government" finally comes? Mr. Morley in the end has no more than Dr. Gardiner to say for Oliver's success as a state-shaper:—

"On the side of constitutional construction, unwelcome as it may sound, a more important place belongs to the sage and steadfast, though most unheroic, Walpole. The development of the English Constitution has in truth proceeded on lines that Cromwell profoundly disliked. The idea of a Parliament always sitting and actively reviewing the details of administration was in his sight an intolerable mischief. It was almost the only system against which his supple mind, so indifferent as it was to all constitutional forms, was inflexible. Yet this for good or ill is our system to-day, and the system of the great host of poli-

tical communities that have followed our Parliamentary model."§

That is to say, Cromwell had much less comprehension of either the principles or the possibilities of constitutional government than was possessed by Lilburne: his "instinct for government" being thus independent alike of insight and of foresight. Are we left, then, after all to extol him solely as the type of the physical force ruler?

Mr. Morley, of course, will for himself make no such admission. He ends with the claim that "It is our true wisdom to learn how to combine sane and equitable historical verdicts with a just value for those eternal qualities of high endeavor on which . . . in all times and places the world's best hopes depend". So far as it clearly goes, this judgment may be concurred in by all of us; but once more some of us must protest that if it is to hold good for the Cromwells, it must also hold good for the Lilburnes. On perfect honesty and perfect clearness of principle such as Lilburne's, "the world's best hopes depend" at least as much as they can possibly do on the "endeavor" of men like Cromwell, who draw the sword without being able to tell themselves clearly why, and who are no sooner

§ Work cited, p. 470.

able to wield irresistible power than they use it to crush precisely such resistance as they themselves had made. Such social infidelity is the most fatal solvent of the best hopes of scrupulous men ; where the indomitable truth of such a one as Lilburne is a perpetual monition and encouragement.

VIII.

Contemplating finally the whole anomaly of the kind of criticism we have been discussing, we cannot but ask how it comes to be. In Mr. Morley's case, as in the others, we are left reckoning with rhetoric ; and though nobody's rhetoric is so fine as his, we must persist in our demurrer to the method. Why does it thus subsist ? It is difficult to find a better answer than this, that the hero-worshipping attitude in English historiography is latterly a result of the influence of Carlyle, as in German historiography it is a result of the temper set up by the successive stages of modern German nationalism. Both influences, in their different ways, are pre-scientific, the German being a reversion to the psychologically primitive, while Carlyle's is a sophistication of the later spirit of the fanaticism of religious creed. In him, the temper emerged in a theosophico-ethical form ; in the eminent and brilliant writers whom he taught to revere Cromwell, it has been refined to what may be termed a socio-

ethical form ; but they, too, hold it by a tenure that has never been scientifically adjusted. In view of this prolongation of an unscientific attitude among writers of such ability and accomplishment, it would indeed be presumptuous on the part of any of us to suppose, much more to claim, that we at length have wholly delivered ourselves from the predilection of the past. At best we can but hope to rectify it in so far as we detect it in them. But to that end it now seems possible to formulate a few rules of historical criticism.

1. To begin with, we are bound to get rid of the primary partialities of race and creed. We relapse into such partialities when we say with Mr. Morley that "no English ruler has ever shown a nobler figure than Cromwell in the case of the Vaudois, and he had all the highest impulses of the nation with him". Cromwell was merely giving his sympathies in the normal way to his fellow Protestants ; and his treatment of Irish Catholics was very much in the spirit of the dragooning of the Vaudois.

2. If we are to make excuses for men who, like Cromwell, do to others what, at the cost of desperate civil war, they will not endure to have done to them, the excuses must at least be impartially made all round. It is a perversion of the purpose of history to reserve sympathy and

condonation for one side, pronouncing nothing but censure on Charles while all Cromwell's sins are palliated as results of the pressure of unforeseen circumstance. It is idle to acquit one on the score that he acted "as he thought best", when the same thing may be said of the other, and indeed of all mankind.

3. Strictly speaking, it is hardly the historian's business to give good and bad marks for character at all; his proper task is to trace the effect of actions, to note the miscalculations, the delusions, and the conditions under which they are fallen into. So long, therefore, as he holds by the arbitrary premises and prejudices on which any of his characters acted, he is prolonging the state of mind which made possible their blunders and their wrongdoings.

For the present, doubtless, it is hard for the historian to avoid a measure of partisanship. Where polemic is forced upon so many of us by the partisanship of past historians, he can hardly ignore the dispute; and since his history to be scientific at all must be sociological, his own social ideals will involve preferences for particular policies. But the more truly sociological he is, the less will he be a respecter of persons, and the more will he tend to see in all history an evolution from which it is his business simply to infer the laws of social well-being.

When that has become his main didactic pre-occupation, his temptation to rhetoric will be at a minimum, and his concern for any forensic use of it will be in a fair way to disappear. He will not cease to recognise heroism and constancy and individual goodness, but he will realise that these are pretty evenly distributed among large masses of men ; and he will develop an interest in moral and political wisdom as being both much rarer and much more important.

THE ART OF PROGRESS.

A LECTURE.

(1892.)

ONE of the great difficulties in the way of harmony among reformers will for many a day continue to be the problem as to the method—or as to whether there is any method—of general reform. It is the old quarrel between the practical men, so-called by themselves, and the theorists, so stigmatised by the others. Can our action, in so far as we try to amend society, be successfully subordinated to a set of abstract principles, from which may be deduced the right course in any given case; or must we be content to study each case on its merits, on the view that man in society is constantly varying, and that what was a sufficient scheme of action a generation ago may not be so now? It may do something to lessen the chances of entanglement if, in looking into this matter, we give some preliminary heed to the terms used.

We shall do well to shun, from the very first, the ordinary implications of the names theorist and practical man. On the one hand, as soon as the practical man rises to the point of formulating his position, and saying that he cannot accept as

complete any theory of social action, but must make a fresh investigation for every step to be taken—then he too is a theorist. Paradoxes are at times convenient forms of statement; and we may say here that to be opposed to theories in politics is to have a theory. On the other hand, no man who professes to have a general set of abstract principles for political action will admit that he is unpractical in the sense of not realising the nature of the case before him. Probably no opponent of Mr. Herbert Spencer, for instance, would deny that that writer has made some of the most painstakingly practical investigations that have been made in recent politics, by way of illustrating his own teachings and discrediting the line of action he opposes. What we have to consider, then, is not a hostility between people with no general ideas and people who have nothing else, but a difference of opinion among people who all try to think comprehensively. For of course we are not here dealing with the type, once so common in England, but now, it is to be hoped, disappearing before the advance of civilisation—the type of man who regarded with petulant ill-will every suggestion of reform, arguing, if we can call it arguing, that England had become great and glorious under her old institutions, and that new-fangled schemes were thus obviously at best un-

patriotic. The practicality of such people, as we can all now see, consisted in their being related to life very much as are the lower animals, having nothing to guide them but the simplest forms of instinctive prejudice, which they naturally took as the light for daily life simply because they could conceive no other. Far be it from us to say that the type does not still exist in considerable numbers; but for our purposes, it is to be hoped, there is no need to do more than label it. Among the ancients, when men entered into amicable relations, it was customary to offer up a sacrifice. I will assume that we here can agree to offer up, in that capacity, the practical man of the politics of our grandfathers' days.

The ceremony is perhaps the more expedient because at this stage, when we try to outline in some way a desirable relation for ourselves to the movement of society, there is a very plain likelihood of divergence of opinion. I have assumed that when we studied the mental history of some great men of the past, recent and more remote, a general agreement was not only possible but likely; that we could all see the sad side of the development of men like More and Burke,* and recognise, to a certain extent, the cause of their going astray. I assumed, too,† that in regard to

* See the lecture on 'Culture and Reaction' in Vol. I.

† See lecture on 'Culture and Pessimism' in Vol. I.

the temper in which thoughtful people should stand towards life—the main question, as it seemed to me, underlying the contentions of optimism and pessimism—it was possible for us to find a common ground, where, on the one hand, there should be no lack of sensitiveness to the dark side of existence, and on the other no futile despair. But now that we have to pass from the question of temper to the question of policy, even though I only propose to discuss policy on broad lines and not on particular issues, I cannot but feel that I am nearer the region of general strife, and that some of you who listen may find the exposition not merely questionable in detail—as all exposition must needs be among people who think for themselves—but unsatisfactory in essentials. But even such divergence as that, I venture to think, is not in the main an evil, or at least need not involve merely negative results. For what is the lesson that culture gives to him who can in the long run keep his culture above his prejudice, in regard to all forms of divergence among men? I do not here need to go into the philosophical proof of Necessarianism; nor need I take up physiologically the question of heredity. That all our acts are the outcome of constitution and surroundings is a truth that is perhaps on its way to becoming a truism. But it is one thing to have arrived at that truth logically or physio-

logically, and another to have realised it in our whole cast of mind by the habit of studying, with an open intelligence, the play of tendency through the long vista of human affairs. Many writers since Lucian have taken satisfaction in the literary device of bringing together in friendly talk dead men who in life never met, and who, if they had met, would have done so as mere antagonists. That device, what is it but the expression of the feeling which culture gives, that our animosities are in large measure blind things, and that it is wiser and greater to rise above them than to obey them? To be able amicably to differ is a sensation which, if less agreeable than that which comes from acquiescence, is perhaps the more profitable because the more educative. Let us not, therefore, regard conflict of feeling as a misfortune, so long as we can but provide that its last phase shall be an intellectual process—an act of judicially ratifying a choice of view—and not that mere primitive sense of hostility which is the end of the matter for the natural man, and which, as we have seen, may unhappily be the end of the matter for the man of culture also, if he do not look warily to himself.

I would put it, then, that there is destined to be in the political life of this country a considerable modification of the methods which in the past have sufficed to carry on the national life. It is

not merely that there will be what we call political changes, but there will be changes in our way of making change. I mean that our familiar method of ranging ourselves into two great parties and seeing everything in terms of party controversy is not a method befitting men and women who are capable of looking into life and history for themselves and forming from their observations a working philosophy of human nature. Our normal assumption is, I believe, that we individually hold by our party out of reasoned conviction, but that on the other side there are the plainest symptoms of unthinking allegiance to party and the party's programme. Let us be frank enough to say that this is largely true all round. Of course we have our reserves, and it would be putting a wearing strain on ourselves to say that our opinions were probably no more independent than those of the Opposition. We must needs hold that the balance of reason is on our side if matters are to go on at all ; and few of us will be slow to make an assumption thus called for by the constitution of our minds. But let us admit that there lies before every man the temptation to give his assent in advance to what his political leaders, so-called, may propose, and to be hostile in advance to whatever may come from the other side. And on this I would make bold to say, speaking from a tolerably advanced political standpoint, that it is

not at all an unmixed misfortune for the forward party that its ranks have lately been split. It is the harm of such a schism that is first seen: the good involved becomes apparent only to analysis and foresight. This much may be said without great risk of challenge, that in the disunion in question the more forward spirits were not at all on one side: that in both groups were to be found some who had worked hard for progress and some who had been rather content to let progress drive them. Abstractedly speaking, this would seem to involve the familiar conclusion that there were faults on both sides; and to those who like to rest on an obviously safe judgment that view may confidently be recommended. But the important point is that, whichever way the balance of error inclined, such an episode served to impress upon those capable of learning new lessons, that the future of political life in this country must be more and more a matter of intelligent all-round criticism, and less and less an affair of uncalculating, or too calculating, partisanship—for of the two kinds it is difficult to say which is the more unsatisfactory: the partisan who will not stop to calculate, or the one who always stops to calculate from more points of view than one.

It is not my business here to discuss political machinery; but, just to show how the intellectual or moral conviction may take shape in action, it

may be of use to call attention for the moment to a principle which has only begun to be heard of in recent years—namely, that the government of this or any professedly constitutional State ought not to rest in the hands of a group of men who are nominally heads of departments, but that heads of departments should be permanent officials whose main duty in life should be to mind their business; and that the work of proposing political measures and controlling policy should be done by the representative body as a whole, leaving the initiative only to voluntarily adjusted sections of that body, who should represent the main currents of opinion of the moment. Some of us can remember the utterance, in influential quarters, of the doctrine that the power of making war and peace ought to be vested in the legislative chamber and not in any body of officials: but it would be difficult to produce any evidence of a tendency to put the principle in practice.

What course would be most consistent with the democratic ideal is, I think, sufficiently clear; but here again we can readily agree that ideal rightness in a given course does not in the least prove its immediate expediency. It is on such points as this that there arises the conflict I have spoken of, between schools of thought, as to the possibility of squaring all public action to a logically ascertained set of principles. The difficulty, I think,

resolves itself in the long run into an affair of words. Who is there that has not a confessed Utopia of his own? It is part of the intellectual furniture of every thinking man: and there are few articles in the outfit which any of us could as a rule worse afford to dispense with. But just as the furniture of domestic life has its uses, and as the pictures are to be looked at and not walked upon, so the Utopia has its value in its own character only; and one of the great practical advantages of a balanced culture is just to guard us from supposing that our aspirations are the best law for immediate action. We come home to the truth which I have sought to indicate in the title of these closing remarks—that there is an *art* in social advance which it is the business of all good citizens to learn. It is Wordsworth who says, in the Ode to Lycoris, speaking of the tone of mind that comes with the advance of age:—

“But something whispers to my heart
That as we downward tend,
Lycoris! life requires an *art*
To which our souls must bend.”

Let us not be disturbed by the parallel. It is the privilege of the race to grow old without decrepitude; to have the experience of age without losing the vigor and hope of youth: it is indeed just this growing mastery of its experience that endows it with a hope unknown before; that constitutes for it, we might almost say, a new birth.

For what has been the sum of the history of mankind down to these days, from the dimmest deeps of time in which imagination can conjure up figures faintly human, rude travesties of the later man, hardly risen above the beast either in aspect or in aspiration? What has it been but an ignorant groping, a following of balefires in the yearning after light, a dreadful stumbling over flinty ways, a still more dreadful strife within itself, man warring on man and nation on nation as blindly as do the beasts for whom rapine is the law of existence. Shall we ever be delivered from that twin dominion of darkness and of hate? Messiahs have come and gone; kingdoms of God have been foretold and prayed for; millenniums have been promised and dreamed-of, and still the shadow of the "condor wings" broods over the swarming world. That it shall be one day dispelled is the promise that comes once more from the voice of man, but this time, happily, from the voice of man not pretending to be aught more. Knowledge of two kinds—knowledge of surrounding nature and knowledge of living man—these are the twin boons that shall slay, as we forecast, the great twin evils. But what does such a salvation mean, and what does it involve? Assuredly the giving of the new light to all, and the acting on it by all. The possession of the knowledge in so many books, and scattered

through a few grades of society, this will no more save the modern world than the flower of culture among the ancients could save their empires from wreck and their national life from murderous convulsion. Once more, if we do not level up we must level down. The blind instincts of the mass cannot conceivably be held in permanent equilibrium by the enlightenment of a ruling few: they too must be transmuted into enlightenment, or they will one day engulf the light in their own darkness. And see what this points to in our political life. First, to the fundamental scientific truth that the existence of democracy must be a continual reaching upward and forward, or nothing. There is a quaint pathos in the naïf observation made by Mr. Bright a few years ago, that all the great political problems were approaching solution, and that the next generation would have very little to dispute about. Let us have no disrespect in the smile with which we receive such a deliverance. If the veteran reformer can feel in his closing years that the battle he has helped to win brings the end of the campaign near, we need not grudge him his faith, though we have framed for ourselves a wider view of things. But it is imperative that the wider view be acted on, if it is to be worth the having.

Well, to come back to the question of policy, it becomes obvious that an increased intellectual

efficiency must pervade our whole political life, and rule our political machinery. To which end, we shall perhaps all agree, every reform that tends to raise the calibre of the parliamentary representative is of vital importance. Happening once to meet an eminent scientific man at a club dinner, and finding the talk run on politics, I put to him, expecting scientific sympathy, the project of the payment of members of Parliament, not as a step likely to be speedily taken, but as a clearly desirable arrangement on theoretic grounds. The response I received was that if members were paid, matters would all go wrong, because we should no longer be able to get gentlemen to do the work. Emerson says that when a bishop meets an intelligent layman and reads fatal interrogations in his eyes, he has no resource but to drink wine with him; and the resource is one which is sometimes valuable to others than bishops. There certainly seemed no better available in that political discussion. Here was a man who in his own scientific department would never dream of putting faith in amateur work, whether done by gentlemen or any other order of citizen, but who was capable of believing that the making of laws for a great empire, the continual readjustment of the political machine to the ever-developing situation, could be satisfactorily done by a body of otherwise idle persons, whose one quali-

fication for the work, and certificate of gentlemanhood, consisted in their respective possession of a considerable private income. On the question of gentlemanhood, I think, we need not linger. The records of one or two unpopular causes preserve strange revelations of what reputable English gentlemen, elected to Parliament, can be, and do, and say. But there is no use in cherishing grudges: the thing for us to remember and realise is that the well-being of nations can be attained only by the quickening of their total intelligence, and the application of intelligence to all the problems of life; and that such a State as ours, consequently, cannot for very much longer be content to trust its legislation to the chances of the existence of capacity among those members of the community who happen either to have made fortunes or to have inherited them.

Mr. Spencer, in a well-known passage of elaborate satire, comments on the present state of things:—"We all know," he says, "that when the successful man of business is urged by his wife and daughters to get into Parliament, that they may attain a higher social standing, he always replies that his occupations through life have left him no leisure to prepare himself, by collecting and digesting the voluminous evidence respecting the effects of institutions and policies, and that he fears he might do mischief. If the

heir to some large estate, or scion of a noble house powerful in the locality, receives a deputation asking him to stand for the county, we constantly read that he pleads inadequate knowledge as a reason for declining: perhaps hinting that after ten years spent in the needful studies, he may have courage to undertake the heavy responsibilities proposed to him." Now, these sarcasms of Mr. Spencer hit all of us, the electors as well as the elected, and we may well bow to his rebuke here, however flatly we may refuse to go with him in his practical conclusions. If it were necessary to add anything to what he has said of the unpreparedness of the average legislator, a word might be said on the spectacle of amateurishness presented in the ordinary course of business in Parliament, the astonishing prolixity of speech and slowness of machinery, the lack of lucidity, the want of grip, the general incapacity to speak three consecutive sentences without stammering. All this must be cured if there is to be much progress towards the ideal. Legislators must be fit for their work, like everybody else in this working world, if their work is to be worth having.

But this very principle, that good work in politics is to be got by setting up the conditions for it, implies something more which Mr. Spencer has distinguished himself by refusing to admit, and

which it is fitting to assert here, in contravention of his teaching. Mr. Spencer is one of the most competent and influential of those who claim to have a complete theory which covers all possibilities of action, and there can be few of us who have not learned much from his scheme. Part of that generalisation, however, consists in a denial that the social evolution which Mr. Spencer formulates can be consciously promoted by regulative action. On the one hand he argues that direct moral teaching will not promote moral action: on the other, that men cannot be moralised by the indirect action of general intellectual culture. On the first head he points to the precepts of Confucius and the morals of the Chinese, to the machinery of churches and chapels, to church schools and public schools, and to the ecclesiastically regulated universities. On the other head he points out that fraudulent bankrupts, promoters of bubble companies, and makers of adulterated goods, are all more or less educated people, and that there have been many educated murderers; and he further contends, with a labored seriousness that becomes just a little distressing, that to teach parsing and spelling and arithmetic cannot cultivate sympathy or educate the sense of justice. Surely all this is somewhat idle. Few writers have done more than Mr. Spencer to make intelligible the influence of environment on or

ganism ; and the kernel of the matter in regard to general education is that a change is effected in the environment of those taught, concurrently with their being made adaptable to it.

The philosopher tells us that we have no more right to associate crime causally with ignorance than to associate it with uncleanness, seeing that the criminal classes are not much given to washing. But this is to fall back on deductive quibbling when there is plain inductive proof. It can be proved that education minimises crime ; and if it were worth while to trifle so it might be shown that even to teach people to wash their faces habitually may in a measurable degree influence their action for good, raising their social standard and making them pick their company. But what is the main issue ? It is this. Does social evolution, or does it not, take the shape of a widening consciousness in a certain number of human beings ; is that widening consciousness, or is it not, a result of the successful play of intelligence on things around ; and can the expansive process, or can it not, be deliberately set up by men in their fellows ?

Now, the effect of Mr. Spencer's contentions, as it seems to some of us, when brought down to matters of every-day action, is to assert that widening consciousness has no modifying effect on the problems of human destiny. Take for in-

stance his summing-up of the functions of Radical and Tory, a subject which he discusses with a scientific serenity that is worthy of all praise, whatever be the soundness of his argument. The function of the Radical, he tells us, is to be fervid and premature; to promote necessary change by his enthusiasm; but to be always ahead of possibilities; while it is the Tory's function in society to prevent change that would be injurious because premature. But see what this leads us to. Either we are to conceive of Radicalism and Toryism as substantially co-extensive with society or not. If not, if we are to regard them merely as sections of an upper class who make laws for an unconscious mass, the argument is theoretically incomplete; and we shall have to import the third factor which is outside both Radicalism and Toryism. But if instead we are to regard Radicalism and Toryism as covering the whole political field—and this indeed seems to be part of Mr. Spencer's assumption—then his generalisation dissolves into thin air the moment we assume that men in general become capable of mastering it. It is impossible, on the face of it, to conceive of either Radicals or Tories remaining what they are if they could arrive at the view that they are both necessary parts of the order of nature. Obviously a given change is premature only because the Tory is spontaneously averse to it—because

the Tory is Tory: if he were not so averse there could be nothing premature in the matter; unless indeed in the sense that over-enthusiastic Radicals might propose a social arrangement which they themselves are not sufficiently evolved to live up to; and in that case it does not appear that they would be a force for good at all, which Mr. Spencer declares they are if taken in conjunction with their opponents. But surely this much is clear, that when once men attain to seeing that their enthusiasms and their prejudices are as it were constitutional, there must be, as indeed Mr. Spencer argues, a reconsidering of matters all round: the Tory analysing his prejudices and the Radical's enthusiasm resolving itself into a scientific calculation of the possibilities of human betterment. Can this then be? Mr. Spencer says the two types equally miss a sound sociology because they are each as it were governed by an impulse which they do not look beyond. But if they merely rise to Mr. Spencer's point of view on this one point, then the whole social situation will be changed, and our sociology must change too.

And this is the end of the whole matter. Mr. Spencer's social philosophy, logically considered, is found to involve the assumption that Society cannot have anything like an all-round self-consciousness—that sociology is, as it were, a science

only for a select few ; the majority remaining always the puppets of the simpler instincts. He ✓ does indeed say that such an all-round self-consciousness is possible only as the accompaniment of a high evolution ; but this leaves us asking whether society is to evolve without our consciously doing anything to help. All Mr. Spencer can say is that the Sociologist "has to see how comparatively little can be done, and yet to find it worth while to do that little : so uniting philanthropic energy with philosophic calm ". It is greatly to be feared that on these lines our Sociologist's calm will tend to engulf his energy. True it certainly is that wisdom counsels moderate expectations in the matter of social advance ; but none the less true is it that the movement depends upon human desire and upon human faith in possibilities of moving. And to say as Mr. Spencer does, that the process of evolution "cannot be abridged" is to use words which either mean nothing or mean anything you please. It all comes back to this, that social progress is in the ratio of the development of the social consciousness, and those of us whose philanthropic energy is not quite absorbed by our philosophic calm tend to believe that we can in our small way slightly further the deepening and the extension of that consciousness.

And this deepening and extension it is, broadly,

that I would term the art of progress, as against the apparent teaching of Mr. Spencer that there is no art of progress at all, but that we must be content to do what little we cannot help doing, so to speak, and no more. Let us freely confess that it is discreditable that of a hundred Bills passed in two years, fifty should have to be repealed within the next twenty. Mistakes there have been, and more mistakes there will be. There is something depressing in the admission, perhaps, but it has to be made and faced. For how should social action be exempt from the penalties hitherto attaching to that of individuals? There is one law for society as for the man: wisdom comes of experience. Take one of the items touched on by Professor Jevons in his essay on experimental legislation: "One of the points about the railway system," he says, "which the Government of the last generation undertook to settle once for all, was the proper place for great railway stations in London. A committee chiefly consisting of military men decided that the railway stations should not be brought into the centre of London. Hence the position of the stations at Euston, King's Cross, Paddington, Waterloo, and Shoreditch. At great cost their decision has been entirely reversed." Well, it would seem hard to blame those wiseacres of a past generation for coming to a mistaken decision on a perfectly new

problem. But we may well demand that such a piece of experience ought to-day to count for something in the settlement of an analogous problem; and when we look back to that blunder of the railway stations, and the further blunder, as it is now confessed, made by England in opposing the Suez Canal, we may go on to ask how long it may be before men become reconciled to the suspended scheme of a Channel Tunnel, though that, as one remembers, has incurred the veto of the bulk of the military men, a formidable section of the scientists, and the entire body of the poets.

But let us not, in considering details, lose sight of our guiding principle as to the spirit in which our social action is to be gone about. I have urged that the lesson of culture in matters of divergence of opinion among those who are able to find some common ground, is the practice of a genial tolerance; and it is impossible to fix a limit to the exercise of that. It is needless to point out how much room there is for it in most departments of life; though it might perhaps be well to lay some stress on the harmfulness of a practice which it is to be feared is extremely common in the political life of this country—namely, the public pretence of extreme animosity where there is at bottom quite a different feeling. If real animosity is to be deprecated, surely sham indignation is to be blamed also. It

is one of the scandals of our public life that men will inveigh against each other extravagantly for party purposes who are prepared to meet on friendly terms in private; and that a party leader will in one week denounce an opponent as the betrayer of his country, and in the next send to express his personal concern when the traitor is suffering from indisposition. In so far as men thus resort to make-believe by way of operating on the public mind, they are simply working for their own and its demoralisation. If the democracy does not get the truth from its leaders, there are only two alternatives: either it will see through them or they will be driven from dissimulation to dissimulation after the proverbial fashion of dissemblers. And there is another consideration. If the leaders do not practise temperance and scrupulosity of speech it is small wonder if the multitude take extravagant views and lean to violent methods. Once more, the democratic principle demands honesty all round if democracy is to succeed. Men will never be made better by deliberate deception.

Our argument is, further, that culture involves independence; that an educated public cannot conceivably remain dependent for its political ideas on the initiative of one or two groups of leaders, still less on the decisions of single leaders; and that parties themselves, as culture

progresses, must be less mechanical in their character, becoming more elastic as the standard of intelligence, and therefore of independence, is raised all round. Such multiplication of criticism is plainly the true safeguard against those legislative miscarriages of which Mr. Spencer complains; and it is for this reason, I would repeat, that an ultimate benefit may be looked for from recent party divisions. For it is a delusion to suppose that the multiplication of independent opinion is an obstacle to common action: on the contrary it means the speedier ventilation of ideas, and therefore readier attainment of a really practicable compromise. Progress never was slower than in the days when a handful of orators made all the Parliamentary speeches and their followers voted in dutiful silence—a fact which has its consoling force in view of some present evils of Parliamentary procedure.

And now, to come back to the starting point, I venture to sum up that, just as individual progress—which is another name for individual culture—means a constant extension of mind, a constant learning, so social progress must mean a constant widening and quickening of the general consciousness, and accordingly, as it seems to me, an unending readjustment of ideals. That is to say, no scheme of action can be a final program. In short, if the individual's experience involves, in

the ideal, a constant modification of some of his views, much more must undying humanity as a whole re-shape its ideals as it goes. So that progress, once more, is a matter of art—an art of which the fundamental rules indeed are presumably ascertainable at any given moment, but which is yet indefinitely expansible from generation to generation. And it is one of the results of culture, I think, to give us this conviction that we cannot attain final truth or fitness, and that our performance is but one stage in an endless advance.

Some one, perhaps, feels that this is a discouraging and barren doctrine, so stated: but is it so? Does it not rather point to us each and all an endless resource, an inexhaustible area for the play of fruitful energy? If we agree that the life of culture promotes happiness for each inasmuch as it enlarges his faculties, we must agree that the perception of the endless work to be done in the world is for healthy minds a stimulating and not a disheartening vision. Do we not all sympathise with Mill's confession that he found the idea of going on living after he had realised all his aspirations was entirely depressing? It was a simple re-statement of the aphorism of Aristotle, which so pleased Carlyle, and at which we virtually arrived on psychological grounds, that "The end of life is an action and not a thought"; or,

as we might put it in biological phrase : satisfaction consists in fulfilment of function. And surely the life around us, with its countless openings for beneficent effort, offers employment enough for all the energies we possess. Surely culture, with its other lessons, will teach men to find there the stimulus they have sought in imaginations of strife and in acts of destruction. Surely they will learn to find poetry and exaltation in this, a far more complex play of force than any of those which have been woven into romance. The appeal comes fitly in the song of an American poetess whose lines are the vindication of the claim she makes :—

“Voice, with what mounting fire thou singest free
 hearts of old fashion,

 English scorers of Spain sweeping the blue sea
 way;

Sing me the daring of life for life, the magnani-
 mous passion

Of man for man, in the mean, populous streets of
 To-day.

“Hand, with what color and power thou couldst show
 in the ring, hot-sanded,

 Brown Bestiarius holding the lean, tawn tiger at
 bay,

Paint me the wrestle of Toil with the wild beast
 Want, bare-handed;

Shadow me forth a soul steadily facing To-day.”

Would that poets of a wider fame could be
looked-to to give as worthy a counsel to their
fellows. But it is one of the most sinister of all
the forms of degeneration that meet us on the

general line of evolution, that the poets, working as they do so constantly in the stuff of passion, tend, whatever may have once been their intellectual sympathies, to become as it were blind mouths to voice the stronger instincts of mankind, the worst as well as the best. The lyre which thrills to love is fatally prone to sound for hate; and one after another our foremost singers in these days is found raising a senseless song of belligerence, in which the ideal of national life is reduced to a blatant celebration of bygone battles, and a glorifying of the names of a few men whose distinction it was to have succeeded in the arts of bloodshed. If there is anything in contemporary life which would justify a stern and unsparing reprobation, it would be this lending of themselves by hysterical poets, backed up by hysterical journalists, to the vulgarest and deadliest of popular passions. When one sees how such emotionalists go on keeping alive in the breasts of nations a madness which may at any moment spread wreck and carnage over the world, there recurs to the mind that cry put by the laureate—himself one of the chief sinners—in the mouth of the remorse-stricken lover on whose hands is the stain of blood:—

“Arise, my God, and strike, for we hold thee just—
Strike dead the whole weak race of venomous worms
That sting each other here in the dust:
We are not worthy to live”!

Of all those who thus seek to lay on the shoulders of their fellows burdens grievous to be borne, how many are there who would themselves shed a drop of blood, or sleep the less soft, while the slaughter was carried on by means of those who had no voice in the quarrel?

We must lay our account by these and other forces of error in life, and reckon on their thwarting the better tendencies in some degree for many a day to come. And then, finally, it is that the enlarged mind which has sought its sphere of action zealously and wisely will find its consolations in the renewed perception that the storm and stress in the career of humanity are but one of the pulsations of the inconceivable whole. The swing to and fro in the total rhythmic progress may seem to us at one time charged with boundless promise and at another fraught only with menace and frustration. But the widened sense will look underneath the fluctuations, and, so scanning the tide of things as the poet's Hebrew maiden gazed on death and life from the dark silence of the mountain heights, will find, as she did, its griefs become "a solemn scorn of ills".